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THE CONFESSIONS OF JACOB BOEHME

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The Confessions of Jacob Boehme

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Compiled and Edited by

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With an Introduction by

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NOTE BY THE EDITOR

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ONE day last winter, in a moment which I must confess to have been idle, I took up Dr. Alexander Whyte's "Appreciation" of Behmen as, following William Law, he calls him. There I found the following passage:

"While we have nothing that can properly be called a biography of Jacob Behmen, we have ample amends made to us in those priceless morsels of autobiography that lie scattered so plentifully up and down all his books. And nothing could be more charming than just those incidental and unstudied utterances of Behmen about himself. Into the very depths of a passage of the profoundest speculation Behmen will all of a sudden throw a few verses of the most childlike

and heart-winning confidences about his own mental history and his own spiritual experience. And thus it is that, without at all intending it, Behmen has left behind him a complete history of his great mind and his holy heart in those outbursts of diffidence, deprecation, explanation, and self-defence, of which his philosophical and theological, as well as his apologetic and experimental, books are all so full. It were an immense service done to our best literature if some of Behmen's students would go through all Behmen's books, so as to make a complete collection and composition of the best of these autobiographic passages. . . . It would then be seen by all, what few, till then, will believe, that Jacob Behmen's mind and heart and spiritual experience all combine to give him a foremost place among the most classical masters in that great field."

I turned at once to the massive volumes

of English translation which the eighteenth century has bequeathed to us. My copy has the name of Maurice on the title-page—Frederick Denison Maurice—for whom Boehme was, he said, "a generative thinker," and on the fly-leaf there is John Sterling, whose granddaughter gave me the books. There I found, where before I had looked for the doctrine only, the man himself. I determined to do my best to extract from the formless mass of writings what was necessary to show that man.

The old translation was known to be as faithful as could fairly be hoped for, and nothing better existed or could now be made. Twentieth-century English would not do. So I used my own copy and followed it very closely. No translation is as sacred as an original, and I have therefore allowed myself to make small changes in the interests of clearness and accuracy, while carefully respecting both

the style of the translator and the mind and meaning of the author.

My task has been in the main one of rigorous omission; I have kept only what was precious for my purpose. Everything that did not reveal the man himself I have rejected; but some of his doctrine is eminently the man, and this I have retained. The outcome, I believe, is a spiritual autobiography which, although it is by a writer who was born over three hundred and fifty years ago and has been read and studied by thousands, has never been seen in its continuity before.

W. S. P.

Im Wasser lebt der Fisch, die Pflanze in der Erden,
Der Vogel in der Luft, die Sonn' am Firmament,
Der Salamander muss im Feu'r erhalten werden,
Und Gottes Herz ist Jakob Boehmes Element.

Angelus of Silesia.

INTRODUCTION

I

JACOB BOEHME, who reveals to us in this book some of the secrets of his inner life, was among the most original of the great Christian mystics. With a natural genius for the things of the spirit, he also exhibited many of the characteristics of the psychic, the seer, and the metaphysician; and his influence on philosophy has been at least as great as his influence on religious mysticism.

No mystic is born ready-made. He is, like other men, the product of nurture no less than of nature. Tradition and environment condition both his vision and its presentation. So, Boehme's peculiar and often difficult doctrine will better be understood when we know something of

his outer life and its influences. He was born of peasant stock in 1575, at a village near Görlitz on the borders of Saxony and Silesia, and as a boy tended cattle in the fields. Of a pious, dreamy, and brooding disposition, even in childhood he is said to have had visionary experiences. Not being sufficiently robust for field-work, he was apprenticed to a shoemaker; but, his severe moral ideas causing disputes with the other workmen, he was dismissed and became a travelling cobbler. During this enforced exile, which coincided with the most impressionable period of youth, Boehme learned something of the unsatisfactory religious conditions of his time; the bitter disputes and mutual intolerance which divided Protestant Germany, the empty formalism which passed for Christianity. He also came into contact with the theosophic and hermetic speculations which distinguished contemporary German thought, and

seemed to many to offer an escape into more spiritual regions from the unrealities of institutional religion. He was himself full of doubts and inward conflict; tortured not only by the craving for spiritual certainty but also by the unruly impulses and passionate longings of adolescence—that "powerful contrarium" of which he so constantly speaks—which are often felt by the mystic in their most exaggerated form. His religious demands were of the simplest kind: "I never desired to know anything of the Divine Majesty . . . I sought only after the heart of Jesus Christ, that I might hide myself therein from the wrathful anger of God and the violent assaults of the Devil." Like St. Augustine in his study of the Platonists, Boehme was seeking "the country which is no mere vision, but a home"; and in this he already showed himself a true mystic. His longings and struggles for light were rewarded, as they have been

in so many seekers at the beginning of their quest, by an intuition of reality, resolving for a time the disharmonies that tormented him. Conflict gave way to a new sense of stability and "blessed peace." This lasted for seven days, during which he felt himself to be "surrounded by the Divine Light": an experience paralleled in the lives of many other contemplatives.

At nineteen, Boehme returned to Görlitz, where he married the butcher's daughter. In 1599 he became a master-shoemaker and settled down to his trade. In the following year, his first great illumination took place. Its character was peculiar, and indicative of his abnormal psychic constitution. Having lately passed through a new period of gloom and depression, he was gazing dreamily at a polished pewter dish which caught and reflected the rays of the sun. Thus brought, in a manner which any psychologist will understand, into a state of ex-

treme suggestibility, the mystical faculty took abrupt possession of the mental field. It seemed to him that he had an inward vision of the true character and meaning of all created things. Holding this state of lucidity, so marvellous in its sense of renovation that he compares it to resurrection from the dead, he went out into the fields. As Fox, possessed by the same ecstatic consciousness, found that "all creation gave another smell beyond what words can utter," so Boehme now gazed into the heart of the herbs and grass, and perceived all nature ablaze with the inward light of the Divine.

It was a pure intuition, exceeding his powers of speech and thought: but he brooded over it in secret, "labouring in the mystery as a child that goes to school," and felt its meaning "breeding within him" and gradually unfolding "like a young plant." The inward light was not constant; his unruly lower nature per-

sisted, and often prevented it from breaking through into the outward mind. This state of psychic disequilibrium and moral struggle, during which he read and meditated deeply, lasted for nearly twelve years. At last, in 1610, it was resolved by another experience, coordinating all his scattered intuitions in one great vision of reality. Boehme now felt a strong impulse to write some record of that which he had seen, and began in leisure hours his first book, the *Aurora*. The title of this work, which he describes as "the Root or Mother of Philosophy, Astrology, and Theology," shows the extent to which he had absorbed current theosophic notions: but his own vivid account—one of the most remarkable first-hand descriptions of automatic or inspirational writing that exists—shows too how small a part his surface mind played in the composition of this book, which he "set down diligently in the impulse of God."

Boehme, like the ancient prophets and many lesser seers, was possessed by a spirit which, whether we choose to regard it as an external power or a phase of his own complex nature, was dissociated from the control of his will, and "came and went as a sudden shower." It poured itself forth in streams of strange and turbid eloquence, unchecked by the critical action of the intellect. He has told us that during the years when his vision was breeding within him he "perused many masterpieces of writing." These almost certainly included the works of Valentine Weigel and his disciples, and other hermetic and theosophic books; and the fruit of these half-comprehended studies is manifest in the astrological and alchemical symbolism which adds so much to the obscurity of his style. Like many visionaries, he was abnormally sensitive to the evocative power of words, using them as often for their suggestive quality as for

their sense. A story is told of him that, hearing for the first time the Greek word "Idea," he became intensely excited, and exclaimed: "I see a pure and heavenly maiden!" It is to this faculty that we must probably attribute his love of alchemical symbols and the high-sounding magical jargon of his day.

A copy of the manuscript of the *Aurora* having fallen into the hands of Gregorius Richter, the Pastor Primarius of Görlitz, Boehme was violently attacked for his unorthodox opinions, and even threatened with immediate exile. Finally he was allowed to remain in the town but forbidden to continue writing. He obeyed this decree for five years; for him, a period of renewed struggle and gloom, during which he was torn between respect for authority and the imperative need for self-expression. His opinions, however, became known. They brought him much persecution—"shame, ignominy, and re-

proach," he says, "budding and blossoming every day"—but also gained him friends and admirers of the educated class, especially among the local students of hermetic philosophy and mysticism. It was under their influence that Boehme —his vocabulary now much enriched and his ideas clarified as the result of numerous discussions—began in 1619 to write again. In the five years between this date and his death, he composed all his principal works. Their bulk—and also, we must confess, their frequent obscurities and repetitions—testify to the fury with which the spirit often drove "the penman's hand." Some, however, do seem to have been written with conscious art, to explain special points of difficulty; for Boehme's first confused and overwhelming intuitions of reality had slowly given place to a more lucid vision. The "Aurora" had turned to "a lovely bright day," in which his vigorous intellect was

able to deal with that which he had seen "couched and wrapt up in the depths of the Deity." Thus the *Forty Questions* gives his answers to problems stated by the learned Dr. Walther, principal of the chemical laboratory at Dresden. His reputation had now spread through Germany, and eminent scholars came to his workshop to learn from him. In 1622 he left off the practice of his trade and devoted himself entirely to writing and exposition.

The publication of the beautiful *Way to Christ,* which was privately printed by one of these admirers in 1623, caused a fresh attack on the part of his old enemy Richter. For once, Boehme condescended to controversy, and replied with dignity to the violent accusations of blasphemy and heresy brought against him. He was nevertheless compelled by the magistrates to leave the town, where he now had a large number of disciples. He went first to the electoral court of Dresden; there

meeting the chief theologians of the day, who were deeply impressed by his prophetic earnestness and intense piety, and refused to uphold the charge of heresy. In August 1624, the death of Richter allowed him to return to Görlitz; but he was already mortally ill, and died on November 21st of that year, at the age of forty-nine.

II

In trying to estimate the character of Boehme's teaching, it is important to realize the sources of his principal conceptions. Though his early revelations, abruptly surging up from the unconscious region, seemed to him to owe nothing to the art of reason, yet it is undeniable that they were strongly influenced by memories of books read, beliefs accepted, and experiences endured. The "lightning-flash" in which he had his sudden visions of the Universe, also illuminated the fur-

niture of his own mind and gave to it a fresh significance and authority. Thus it is often his own interior drama which he sees reflected on the cosmic screen; a proceeding which the "theosophic" doctrine of man as the microcosm of the Universe helped him to justify. His unstable temperament, with its alternations between gloom and illumination, its constant sense of struggle, its abrupt escapes into the light—the "powerful contrarium" with which he "stood in perpetual combat"—conditions his picture of the eternal conflict between light and darkness at the very heart of creation; the crude stuff of striving nature and the formative Spirit of God. The "living running fire" which he feels in his own spirit, is his assurance of the Divine fiery creative energy.

Further, the Lutheran Christianity which formed the basis of his religious life contributed many elements to his

scheme. Thence came the intense moral dualism, the Pauline opposition between the "dark-world" of unregenerate nature and the "light-world" of grace, the doctrines of the Trinity and of regeneration, and generally those credal symbols which he often uses in a theosophic sense. He is familiar with the Bible, making constant though sometimes fantastic use of its language and imagery. Finally, the German mystics and hermetic philosophers of the Renaissance, in whom he was deeply read, gave him much of the raw material of his philosophy. Alchemy in his day was still a favourite toy of speculative minds; being understood partly in the physical, partly in the transcendental sense. The "doctrine of signatures," which is the subject of one of Boehme's later works, was still taken seriously as a guide to practical medicine; the stuffed crocodile hung in the laboratory, the toad and the spider were care-

fully distilled. Yet for the spiritual alchemists the quest of the Stone was the quest of an unearthly perfection, and human nature was the true matter of the "great work." This "hermetic science," in which chemistry, magic, and mysticism were strangely combined, plainly made a strong appeal to Boehme; and its influence upon his work was not always fortunate. But his debt to the more genuinely mystical writers of the sixteenth century, especially the Silesian reformer, Caspar Schwenckfeld, and Valentine Weigel, is of far greater importance. Certainly through Weigel, and perhaps also at first-hand, he became acquainted with Paracelsus, whose doctrine of humanity as the sum of three orders—the natural, the astral, and the divine—he adopts in the *Threefold Life of Man* and *Three Principles of the Divine Essence.* Through Weigel, too, he traces his descent from the great German mystics of

the fourteenth century; for the saintly pastor of Zschopau was soaked in the works of Tauler, and edited that pearl of Christian mysticism the *Theologia Germanica*. Boehme, therefore, was far from being an isolated spiritual phenomenon. He was fed from many sources; but all that he received was fused and remade in the furnace of his own inner life. The result was a new creation, as unique as the White Stone which the alchemist made from his mercury, sulphur, and salt; but we do it no honour by ignoring the elements from which it sprang.

It is not possible to extract from Boehme's vast, prolix, and often difficult works any closed system of philosophy. Often he repeats himself, sometimes contradicts himself, or hides his meaning behind a haze of inconsistent symbols; for his writing never wholly lost its inspirational character. But as we study these writings we gradually discern cer-

tain guiding lines, certain fixed characters, which help us to find our way through the maze. These, thoroughly grasped, enable us to recognize order and meaning in that which is often an apparent chaos; to enjoy and understand something of that revelation which transformed the little Saxon cobbler into a prophet of the Kingdom of God.

Boehme's map of reality is based, like that of most mystics, on the number three, and has several interesting points of contact with Neoplatonism. The universe in its essence consists of three worlds, which are "none other than God Himself in His wonderful works." Without and beyond Nature is the Abyss of the Deity, "the Eternal Good that is the Eternal One": a Plotinian definition of the Absolute which may have reached Boehme through Eckhart and his school. The three worlds are the trinity of emanations through which the transcendent Unity

achieves self-expression. Boehme calls them the fire-world, the light-world, and the dark-world. They are not mutually exclusive spheres, but aspects of a whole. By them "we are to understand a threefold Being, or three worlds *in* one another"; and all have their part in the production of that outward world of sense in which we live.

Fire is the eternal energetic Divine will towards creation; that unresting life, born of a craving, which inspires the natural world of becoming. "What ever is to come to anything must have Fire": it is the self-expression of the Father. From the primal fire or fount of generation in its fierceness are born the pair of opposites through which the Divine energy is manifested: the "dark-world" of conflict, evil, and wrath which is Eternal Nature in itself, and the "light-world" of wisdom and love, which is Eternal Spirit in itself—the Platonic *Nous*, the Son of

Christian theology. The dark-world represents that quality in life which is recalcitrant to all we call divine; "unregenerate nature," which was for Boehme no illusion but a dreadful fact. It is the sphere of undetermined nonmoral striving, and of all "biting, hating, and striking and arrogant self-will among men and beasts." The light-world is the sphere of all determined goodness and beauty; the state of being towards which the fiery impulse of becoming should tend. It is the Word, or "Heart of God," as distinguished from His Will, and holds within itself all those values which we speak of as divine. In the Light is "the eternal original of all powers, colours, and virtues." Here again, we perceive the Platonic ancestry of one of Boehme's most characteristic ideas. In and through this Light the crude strivings of the fiery life-force are sublimated; its titanic zest is transformed into "the desire of love and

joy." The Dark is necessary to it, because "nothing without opposition can become manifest to itself."

The outer world in which we dwell according to the body is the creation of the Fire and the Light. Ignoring the separate existence of the dark-world, which is then looked upon as one aspect of the Fire, Boehme sometimes speaks of this physical order as the third Divine Principle, or sphere of the Holy Spirit, the "Lord and Giver of Life"; who is thus assigned a position very close to the Plotinian *Psyche*, or "soul of the world." This outer world, he says, is "both evil and good, both terrible and lovely," since in it love and wrath strive together. "The Nature-life works unto Fire, and the Spirit-life unto Light." The business alike of universal and of human life, the essence of its "salvation," is the bringing of the Light out of its fiery origin—spiritual beauty out of the raw stuff of

energetic nature. This perpetual shooting up of life from nature-dark to spirit-light is sometimes called by Boehme the "new birth of Christ" and sometimes the "growing up of the Lily." It is happening all the while; the triumphant self-realization of the perfection of God. He sees the universe as a vast alchemic process, a seething pot, perpetually distilling the base metals into celestial gold.

As with the cosmos, so with its microcosm man. He, too, is in process of becoming. The "great work" of the hermetists must be accomplished in him, and he must accept its "anguish"—the conflict of the fire and the light. "Man *must* be at war with himself, if he wishes to be a heavenly citizen." The combat is inevitable, and the victory is possible, because we have the essence of all three worlds within us, and are "made of *all* the powers of God." The eternal Light "glimmers" in every consciousness. "When

I see a right man," says Boehme, "there I see three worlds standing." Hence human life is "a hinge between light and darkness; to whichever it gives itself up, in that same does it burn." Its possibilities of adventure are infinite. The arc through which it may swing is as wide as the difference between hell and heaven. Fire —anguish, effort, and conflict—it cannot escape; this is the manifestation of that will which is life. But it can choose between the torment of its own separate dark fire—the self-centred craving which is the essence of sin—and self-abandonment to the divine fire of God's unresting will towards perfection. The one sets up a whirlpool within the eternal process: the other contributes its store of energy and love to that universal work which transmutes the dark elements into the light, and heals the apparent cleavage between "nature" and "spirit." "Our whole teaching," says Boehme, "is nothing

else than how a man should kindle in himself God's light-world." That world is here and now; and his one aim was to open the eyes of other men to this encompassing and all-penetrating reality. All lies in the direction of the will: "What we make of ourselves, that we are."

For him, the universe was primarily a religious fact: its fiery energies, its impulse towards growth and change, were significant because they were aspects of the life of God. His cosmic vision was the direct outcome of spiritual experience; he told it, because he wished to stimulate in all men the spiritual life, make them realize that "Heaven and Hell are present everywhere, and it is but the turning of the *will* either into God's love or into His wrath, that introduceth into them." When the restlessness of becoming, the anxious craving, which should lead both cosmic and human life to its bourne, is turned back on itself and becomes a fiery

self-devouring desire, a "wheel of anguish," the alchemic process goes wrong. Then is produced the condition which Boehme calls the *turba*; and the *turba* is the essence of hell. But everyone who yields himself to the impulse of the Light stands by that very act in the heaven of God's heart; for "Heaven is nothing but a manifestation of the Eternal One, wherein all worketh and willeth in quiet love."

Hence at the end of this vast dynamic vision, this astonishing harmony of the scientific and the Christian universe, we find that the imperatives which govern man's entry into truth are moral: patience, courage, love, and surrender of the will. These evangelical virtues are the condition of our knowledge of reality; for though "God dwells in all things, nothing comprehends Him unless it be one with Him." This is the doctrine of all the great mystics, and they have

proved its truth in their own lives. Such an attunement of human to divine life is the real object of Christianity: and we must not forget that Boehme was before all else a practical Christian, for whom his religion was a vital process, not merely a creed. He complained that the orthodox of his day were content to believe that Christ had once died for them; but such acceptance of history saved none. "A true Christian is not a mere historical new man"—he is a biological fact, the crown of the "great work" of spiritual alchemy. Christian history is only "the cradle of the Child"; the framework within which the law of regeneration is perpetually manifested, and the "heavenly man," citizen of the eternal light-world, is brought forth in the world of time. This, says Boehme, "we heartily wish that the titular and Lip-Christians might once find by experience in themselves, and so pass from the history into the substance." It

was from the fulness of his own experience that he wrote, as this collection of his personal declarations shows. In it we see how close was the connection between his inner life and his "mystical" vision; the great moral demands and perpetual conflicts which conditioned his intuitive knowledge of reality. That knowledge was the fruit of the "earnest seeking" pursued from adolescence to the end of his earthly life: of a will and craving persistently yet humbly set on the only rational object of desire, and turning to its purposes every element of his threefold nature. Such completeness of dedication is the foundation of all sane mysticism, and works in those who achieve it a veritable change of consciousness, an enhancement of life, inconceivable to other men.

"Make trial in this manner," says Boehme again, "and thou wilt quickly see and feel another man with another sense

and thoughts and understanding. I speak as I know and have found by experience; a soldier knows how it is in the wars. This I write out of love as one who telleth in the spirit how it hath gone with himself, for an example to others, to try if any would follow him and find out how true it is."

EVELYN UNDERHILL

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THE CONFESSIONS OF JACOB BOEHME

* * *

CHAPTER I

* * *

ART has not wrote this, neither was there any time to consider how to set it punctually down, according to the right understanding of letters, but all was ordered according to the direction of the Spirit, which often went in haste; so that in many words letters may be wanting, and in some places a capital letter for a word. The Penman's hand, by reason he was not accustomed to it, did often shake; and though I could have wrote in a more accurate, fair, and plain manner, yet the reason I did not was this, that the burning fire often forced forward with speed, and the hand and pen must hasten directly after it; for that fire comes and goes as a sudden shower. I can write nothing of myself but as a child which

neither knows nor understands anything, which neither has ever been learnt; and I write only that which the Lord vouchsafes to know in me according to the measure as himself manifests in me.

I never desired to know anything of the Divine Mystery, much less understood I the way to seek and find it. I knew nothing of it, which is the condition of poor laymen in their simplicity.

I sought only after the heart of Jesus Christ, that I might hide myself therein from the wrathful anger of God and the violent assaults of the Devil. And I besought the Lord earnestly for his Holy Spirit and his grace, that he would please to bless and guide me in him, and take that away from me which turned me from him. I resigned myself wholly to him, that I might not live to my own will, but his; and that he only might lead and direct me, to the end I might be his child in his son Jesus.

In this my earnest and Christian seeking and desire (wherein I suffered many a shrewd repulse, but at last resolved rather to put myself in hazard than leave off), the Gate was opened to me, that in one quarter of an hour I saw and knew more than if I had been many years together at an University, at which I exceedingly admired and thereupon turned my praise to God for it.

So that I did not only greatly wonder at it, but did also exceedingly rejoice; and presently it came powerfully into my mind to set the same down in writing, for a memorial for myself, though I could very hardly apprehend the same in my external man and express it with the pen. Yet, however, I must begin to labour in this great mystery as a child that goes to school.

I saw it as in a great deep in the internal; for I had a thorough view of the Universe, as a complex moving fulness

wherein all things are couched and wrapped up; but it was impossible for me to explain the same.

Yet it opened itself in me, from time to time, as in a young plant. It was with me for the space of twelve years, and was as it were breeding. I found a powerful instigation within me before I could bring it forth into external form of writing; but whatever I could apprehend with the external principle of my mind, that I wrote down.

Afterwards, however, the Sun shone upon me a good while, but not constantly, for sometimes the Sun hid itself, and then I knew not nor well understood my own labour. Man must confess that his knowledge is not his own but from God, who manifests the Ideas of Wisdom to the soul, in what measure he pleases.

It is not to be understood that my reason is greater or higher than that of all other men living; but I am the Lord's

twig or branch, and a very mean and little spark of his light; he may set me where he pleases, I cannot hinder him in that.

Neither is this my natural will, that I can do it by my own small ability; for if the Spirit were withdrawn from me, then I could neither know nor understand my own writings.

O gracious amiable Blessedness and great Love, how sweet art thou! How friendly and courteous art thou! How pleasant and lovely is thy relish and taste! How ravishing sweetly dost thou smell! O noble Light, and bright Glory, who can apprehend thy exceeding beauty? How comely adorned is thy love! How curious and excellent are thy colours! And all this eternally. Who can express it?

Or why and what do I write, whose tongue does but stammer like a child which is learning to speak? With what shall I compare it? or to what shall I

liken it? Shall I compare it with the love of this world? No, that is but a mere dark valley to it.

O immense Greatness! I cannot compare thee with any thing, but only with the resurrection from the dead; there will the Love-Fire rise up again in us, and rekindle again our astringent, bitter, and cold, dark and dead powers, and embrace us most courteously and friendly.

O gracious, amiable, blessed Love and clear bright Light, tarry with us, I pray thee, for the evening is at hand.

CHAPTER II

* * *

I AM a sinful and mortal man, as well as thou, and I must every day and hour grapple, struggle, and fight with the Devil who afflicts me in my corrupted lost nature, in the wrathful power which is in my flesh, as in all men continually.

Suddenly I get the better of him, suddenly he is too hard for me; yet, notwithstanding, he has not overcome or conquered me, though he often gets the advantage over me.

If he buffets me, then I must retire and give back, but the divine power helps me again; then he also receives a blow, and often loses the day in the fight.

But when he is overcome, then the heavenly gate opens in my spirit, and then the spirit sees the divine and heav-

enly Being, not externally beyond the body, but in the well-spring of the heart. There rises up a flash of the Light in the sensibility or thoughts of the brain, and therein the Spirit does contemplate.

For man is made out of all the powers of God, out of all the seven spirits of God, as the angels also are. But now seeing he is corrupted, therefore the divine moving does not always unfold its powers and operate in him. And though it springs in him, and if indeed it shines, yet it is incomprehensible to the corrupted nature.

For the Holy Ghost will not be held in the sinful flesh, but rises up like a lightning-flash, as fire sparkles and flashes out of a stone when a man strikes it.

But when the flash is caught in the fountain of the heart, then the Holy Spirit rises up, in the seven unfolding fountain spirits, into the brain, like the dawning of the day, the morning redness.

In that Light the one sees the other,

feels the other, smells the other, tastes the other, and hears the other, and is as if the whole Deity rose up therein.

Herein the spirit sees into the depth of the Deity; for in God near and far off is all one; and that same God is in his threefoldness as well in the body of a holy soul as in heaven.

From this God I take my knowledge and from no other thing; neither will I know any other thing than that same God. And he it is which makes that assurance in my spirit, that I steadfastly believe and trust in him.

Though an angel from heaven should tell this to me, yet for all that I could not believe it, much less lay hold on it; for I should always doubt whether it was certainly so or no. But the Sun itself arises in my spirit, and therefore I am most sure of it.

The soul liveth in great danger in this world; and therefore this life is very well

called the valley of misery, full of anguish, a perpetual hurly-burly, pulling and hauling, warring, fighting, struggling and striving.

But the cold and half-dead body does not always understand this fight of the soul. The body does not know how it is with it, but is heavy and anxious; it goes from one business to another, and from one place to another; it seeketh for ease and rest.

And when it comes where it would be, yet it finds no such thing as that which it seeks. Then doubtings and unbelief come upon it; sometimes it seems to it as if God had quite cast it off. It doth not understand the fight of the spirit, how the same is sometimes down and sometimes uppermost.

Thou must know that I write not here as a story or history, as if it was related to me from another. I must continually stand in that combat, and I find it to be

full of heavy strivings where in I am often struck down to the ground, as well as all other men.

But for the sake of the violent fight, and for the sake of the earnestness which we have together, this revelation has been given me, and the vehement driving or impulse to bring it so to pass as to set all down on paper.

What the total sequel is, which may follow upon and after this, I do not fully know. Only sometimes future mysteries in the depth are shown to me.

For when the flash rises up in the centre, one sees through and through, but cannot well apprehend or lay hold on it; for it happens to such an one as when there is a tempest of lightning, where the flash of fire opens itself and suddenly vanishes.

So it goes also in the soul when it breaks quite through in its combat. Then it beholds the Deity as a flash of light-

ning; but the source and the unfolding of sins covers it suddenly again. For the old Adam belongs to the earth, and does not, with the flesh, belong to God.

In this combat I had many hard trials to my heart's grief. My Sun was often eclipsed or extinguished, but did rise again; and the oftener it was eclipsed the brighter and clearer was its rising again.

I do not write this for my own praise, but to the end that the reader may know wherein my knowledge stands, that he might not seek from me that which I have not, or think me to be what I am not.

But what I am, that all men are who wrestle in Jesus Christ our King for the crown of the eternal Joy, and live in the hope of perfection.

I marvel that God should reveal himself thus fully to such a simple man, and that he thus impels him also to set it down in writing; whereas there are many learned

writers which could set it forth and express it better, and demonstrate it more exactly and fully than I, that am a scorn and fool to the world.

But I neither can nor will oppose him; for I often stood in great striving against him, that if it was not his impulse and will he would be pleased to take it from me; but I find that with my striving against him I have merely gathered stones for this building.

Now I am climbed up and mounted so very high that I dare not look back for fear a giddiness should take me; and I have now but a short length of ladder to the mark to which it is the whole desire, longing, and delight of my heart to reach fully. When I go upward I have no giddiness at all; but when I look back and would return, then am I giddy and afraid to fall.

Therefore have I put my confidence in the strong God, and will venture, and see

what will come of it. I have no more but one body, which nevertheless is mortal and corruptible; I willingly venture that. If the light and knowledge of my God do but remain with me, then I have sufficiently enough for this life and the life to come.

Thus I will not be angry with my God, though for his Name's sake I should endure shame, ignominy, and reproach which springs, buds, and blossoms for me every day, so that I am almost inured to it: I will sing with the prophet David, Though my body and soul should faint and fail, yet thou, O God, art my trust and confidence; also my salvation and the comfort of my heart.

CHAPTER III

* * *

MEN have always been of the opinion that heaven is many hundred, nay, many thousand, miles distant from the face of the earth, and that God dwells only in that heaven.

Some have undertaken to measure this height and distance, and have produced many strange and monstrous devices. Indeed, before my knowledge and revelation of God, I held that only to be the true heaven which, in a round circumference, very azure of a light blue colour, extends itself above the stars; supposing that God had therein his peculiar Being, and did rule only in the power of his Holy Spirit in this world.

But when this had given me many a hard blow and repulse, doubtless from

the Spirit, which had a great longing yearning towards me at last I fell into a very deep melancholy and heavy sadness, when I beheld and contemplated the great Deep of this world, also the sun and stars, the clouds, rain and snow, and considered in my spirit the whole creation of the world.

Wherein then I found, in all things, evil and good, love and anger; in the inanimate creatures, in wood, stones, earth and the elements, as also in men and beasts.

Moreover I considered the little spark of light, man, what he should be esteemed for with God, in comparison of this great work and fabric of heaven and earth.

And finding that in all things there was evil and good, as well in the elements as in the creatures, and that it went as well in this world with the wicked as with the virtuous, honest and godly; also that the barbarous people had the best countries

in their possession, and that they had more prosperity in their ways than the virtuous, honest and godly had; I was thereupon very melancholy, perplexed and exceedingly troubled, no Scripture could comfort or satisfy me though I was very well acquainted with it and versed therein; at which time the Devil would by no means stand idle, but was often beating into me many heathenish thoughts which I will here be silent in.

Yet when in this affliction and trouble I elevated my spirit (which then I understood very little or nothing at all what it was), I earnestly raised it up into God, as with a great storm or onset, wrapping up my whole heart and mind, as also all my thoughts and whole will and resolution, incessantly to wrestle with the Love and Mercy of God, and not to give over unless he blessed me, that is, unless he enlightened me with his Holy Spirit, whereby I might understand his will and

be rid of my sadness. And then the Spirit did break through.

But when in my resolved zeal I gave so hard an assault, storm, and onset upon God and upon all the gates of hell, as if I had more reserves of virtue and power ready, with a resolution to hazard my life upon it (which assuredly were not in my ability without the assistance of the Spirit of God), suddenly my spirit did break through the gates of hell, even into the innermost moving of the Deity, and there I was embraced in love as a bridegroom embraces his dearly beloved bride.

The greatness of the triumphing that was in my spirit I cannot express either in speaking or writing; neither can it be compared to any thing but that wherein life is generated in the midst of death. It is like the resurrection from the dead.

In this light my spirit suddenly saw through all, and in and by all, the creatures; even in herbs and grass it knew God, who he is and how he is and what

his will is. And suddenly in that light my will was set on by a mighty impulse to describe the Being of God.

But because I could not presently apprehend the deepest movings of God and comprehend them in my reason, there passed almost twelve years before the exact understanding thereof was given me.

And it was with me as with a young tree, which is planted in the ground and at first is young and tender, and flourishing to the eye, especially if it comes on lustily in its growing; but does not bear fruit presently, and though it has blossoms they fall off: also frost and snow and many a cold wind beat upon it before it comes to any growth and bearing of fruit.

So also it went with my spirit: the first fire was but a beginning and not a constant and lasting light; since that time many a cold wind blew upon it, yet never extinguished it.

The tree was also often tempted to try

whether it could bear fruit, and showed itself with blossoms; but the blossoms were struck off till this very time, wherein it stands in its fruit.

From this light now it is that I have my knowledge, as also my will, impulse and driving; and therefore I will set down the knowledge in writing according to my gift, and let God work his will. Though I should enrage the whole world, the Devil, and all the gates of hell, I will look on and wait what the Lord intends with it.

For I am too, too weak to know his purpose; and though the Spirit affords in the light some things to be known which are to come, yet according to the outward man I am too weak to comprehend them.

The animated or soulish spirit, which unfolds its powers and unites with God, comprehends it well; but the animal body attains only a glimpse thereof; just as by a lightning-flash. This is the state of the

innermost moving of the soul, when it breaks through the outermost in an elevation by the Holy Ghost. But the outermost presently closes again, for the wrath of God is stirred up there as fire is struck from the stone, and holds it captive in its power.

Then the knowledge of the outward man is gone, and he walks up and down, afflicted and anxious, as a woman with child who is in her travail, and would willingly bring forth, but cannot and is full of throes.

Thus it goes also with the animal body when it has once tasted of the sweetness of God. Then it continually hungers and thirsts after it; but the Devil in the power of God's wrath opposes exceedingly, and so a man in such a course must continually be anxious; and there is nothing but fighting and warring for him.

I write not this for my own glory, but for a comfort to the reader, so that if

perhaps he be minded to walk with me upon my narrow bridge, he should not suddenly be discouraged, dismayed, and distrustful, when the gates of hell and God's wrath meet him and present themselves before him.

When we shall come together, over this narrow bridge of the fleshly working, to be in yonder green meadow to which the wrath of God does not reach, then we shall be fully requited for all our damages and hurts we have sustained; though indeed at present the world accounts us for fools, and we must suffer the Devil to domineer, rush, and roar over us.

Now observe: if thou fixest thy thoughts concerning heaven, and wouldst willingly conceive in thy mind what it is and where it is and how it is, thou needst not to cast thy thoughts many thousand miles off, for that place, that heaven, is not thy heaven.

And though indeed that is united with thy heaven as one body, and so together

is but the one body of God, yet thou art not become a creature in that very place which is above many hundred thousand miles off, but thou art in the heaven of this world, which contains also in it such a Deep as is not of any human numbering.

The true heaven is everywhere, even in that very place where thou standest and goest; and so when thy spirit presses through the astral and the fleshly, and apprehends the innermost moving of God, then it is clearly in heaven.

But that there is assuredly a pure glorious heaven in all the three movings aloft above the deep of this world, in which God's Being together with that of the holy angels springs up very purely, brightly, beauteously, and joyfully, is undeniable. And he is not born of God that denies it.

Thou must know that this world in its innermost unfolds its properties and powers in union with the heaven aloft

above us; and so there is one Heart, one Being, one Will, one God, all in all.

The outermost moving of this world cannot comprehend the outermost moving of heaven aloft above this world, for they are one to the other as life and death, or as a man and a stone are one to the other.

There is a strong firmament dividing the outermost of this world from the outermost of the upper heaven; and that firmament is Death, which rules and reigns everywhere in the outermost in this world, and sets a great gulf between them.

The second moving of this world is in the life; it is the astral, out of which is generated the third and holy moving; and therein love and wrath strive one with the other.

For the second moving stands in the

seven fountain spirits of this world, and is in all places and in all the creatures as in man. But the Holy Ghost also rules and reigns in that second, and helps to generate the third, the holy moving.

This, the third, is the clear and holy heaven which unites with the Heart of God, distinct from and above all heavens, as one heart.

Therefore, thou child of man, be not discouraged, be not so timorous and pusillanimous; if thou in thy zeal and earnest sincerity sowest the seed of thy tears, thou dost not sow it in earth but in heaven; for in thy astral moving thou sowest, and in thy soulish moving thou reapest, and in the kingdom of heaven thou possessest and enjoyest it.

If man's eyes were but opened he should see God everywhere in his heaven; for heaven stands in the innermost moving everywhere.

Moreover, when Stephen saw the heaven opened and the Lord Jesus at the right hand of God, then his spirit did not first swing itself aloft into the upper heaven, but it penetrated into the innermost moving wherein heaven is everywhere.

Neither must thou think that God is such a kind of Being as is only in the upper heaven, and that the soul, when it departs from the body, goes aloft many hundred thousand miles off. It needs not do that; it is set in the innermost moving, and there it is with God and in God, and with all the holy angels, and can suddenly be above and suddenly beneath; it is not hindered by any thing.

For in the innermost the upper and nether Deity is one body and is an open gate. The holy angels converse and walk up and down in the innermost of this world by and with our King Jesus Christ; as well as in the uppermost, aloft in their quarters, courts or region.

Where then would or should the soul of man rather be than with its King and Redeemer Jesus Christ? For near and afar off in God is one thing, one comprehensibility, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, everywhere.

The gate of God in the upper heaven is no other, also no brighter, than it is in this world. And where can there be greater joy than in that place where every hour and moment beautiful, loving, dear, new-born children and angels come to Christ, which are passed through death into life? Where can there be greater joy than where in the midst of death life is generated continually? Does not every soul bring along with it a new triumph? and so there is nothing else but an exceedingly friendly welcoming and salutation there.

Dost thou think my writing is too earthly? If thou wert to come to this window of mine thou wouldst not then say that it is earthly. Though I must in-

deed use the earthly tongue yet there is a true heavenly understanding couched under it, which in my outermost moving I am not able to express.

I know very well that the word concerning the three movings cannot be comprehended or apprehended in every man's heart, especially where the heart is too much steeped, soaked, or drowned in the flesh. But I cannot render it otherwise than as it is, for it is just so; and though I write mere spirit, as indeed and in truth it is no other, yet such a heart understands only flesh.

Thou shouldst not suppose that which I write here to be as a doubtful opinion, questionable whether it be so or no; for the gate of heaven and hell stands open to the spirit, and in the Light it presses through them both and beholds them, also proves and examines them.

And though the Devil cannot take the Light from me, yet he hides it often with

the outward and fleshly moving, so that the astral is in anxiety and in a strait, as if it were imprisoned.

But these are only his blows and strokes whereby the seed of paradise is covered and obscured. Concerning which also the holy apostle Paul saith that a great thorn was given him in his flesh and he besought the Lord earnestly to take it from him, whereupon the Lord answered, Let my grace be sufficient for thee.

For he also was come to this place and would fain have had the Light without obstruction or hindrance, as his own in the astral moving. But it could not be; for wrath abides in the fleshly moving, and he must endure corruption there. If wrath should be wholly taken away from the astral, then in that he would be like God and know all things as God himself does.

Which now in this life that soul only knows which unfolds its powers in union

with the Light of God, and even that soul cannot perfectly bring it back again into the astral. Just as an apple on a tree cannot bring its smell and taste back again into the tree or into the earth, though it be indeed the son of the tree, so it is also in the nature of man.

The holy man Moses was so high and deep in this Light that it glorified, clarified, or brightened the astral also, whereby the outermost of the flesh in his face was clarified, brightened, or glorified.

He also desired to see the light of God perfectly in the astral; but it could not be, for the bar of the wrath lies before it. Even the whole and universal nature of the astral in this world cannot comprehend the Light of God; and therefore the Heart of God is hidden, though it dwells in all places and comprehends all.

Thou seest how the wrath of God in the outermost of nature lies hid and rests, and cannot be awakened unless men themselves awaken it, who with their

fleshly moving unfold their powers to stir up and unite with the wrath in the outermost of nature.

Therefore if anyone should be damned into hell he ought not to say that God has done it, or that he wills it to be so. Man awakens the wrath-fire in himself, and this, if it grows burning, afterwards unites with God's wrath and the hellish fire, as one thing.

For when thy light is extinguished, then thou standest in the darkness. Within the darkness the wrath of God is concealed, and if thou awakenest it, then it burns in thee.

There is fire even in a stone: if you do not strike upon it the fire remains concealed; but, if you strike it, then the fire springs forth, and if any combustible matter be near it, that will take fire and burn, and so there comes to be a great fire. Thus it is also with man, when he kindles the wrath-fire which is otherwise at rest.

CHAPTER IV

* * *

WHEN thou beholdest the deep above the earth thou oughtest not to say that it is *not* the gate of God where God in his holiness dwells: No, no, think not so, for the whole Holy Trinity, God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, dwells in the centre under the firmament of heaven, though that very firmament cannot comprehend him.

Indeed all is as it were one body, the outermost and the innermost moving together with the firmament of heaven, as also the astral moving therein, in and with which the wrath of God unfolds; but yet they are one to another as the government, frame or constitution in man.

The flesh marks the outward moving,

which is the house of death. The second moving in man is the astral, in which the life stands, and wherein love and wrath wrestle one with another. Thus far man himself knows himself, for the astral generates the life in the outermost, that is, in the flesh. The third moving is generated between the astral and the outermost, and is called the animated or soulish moving, or the soul, and is as great as the whole man.

That moving the outward man neither knows nor comprehends, neither does the astral comprehend it; but every fountain spirit comprehends its innate source, which resembles the heaven.

The animated or soulish man must press through the firmament of heaven to God, and live with God, else the whole man cannot come into heaven to God.

Man cannot be wholly pure from wrath and sin, for the movings of the depth in this world are not fully pure before the

Heart of God; always love and wrath wrestle one with another.

In the second, the astral, wherein now the love and the wrath are against one another, is a spirit of the life, and of the firmament of heaven which is of the midst of the spirit.

And the Devil can reach half into this moving, so far as the wrath reaches and no farther; therefore the Devil cannot know how the other part in this moving has its source. This other part of the astral, which abides in the love, is the firmament of heaven holding captive the kindled wrath; together with all the devils, for they cannot enter thereinto. In that heaven dwells the Holy Spirit, which goes forth from the Heart of God, and strives against the wrath, and generates to himself a temple in the midst of the fierceness of the wrath of God.

And in this heaven dwells the man that fears God, even while alive in the

body here upon earth; for that heaven is as well in man as in the deep above the earth. And as the deep above the earth is, so is man also, both in love and wrath, till after the departure of the soul; but when the soul departs from the body, then it abides either only in the heaven of love or only in the wrath.

And in this heaven the holy angels dwell amongst us, and the devils in the other part. In this heaven man lives between heaven and hell, and must suffer from the wrath and endure many hard blows, temptations, persecutions; and, many times, torments and oppression.

The wrath is called the Cross, and the love-heaven is called patience, and the spirit that rises up therein is called hope and faith, which unites with God and wrestles with the wrath till it overcomes and gets the victory.

O ye theologists, the spirit here opens a door and gate for you! If you will not

now see and feed your sheep and lambs on a green meadow, instead of a dry, parched heath, you must be accountable for it before the severe, earnest and wrathful judgement of God; therefore look to it.

I take heaven to witness that I do here what I must. The Spirit drives me to it, so that I am wholly led captive thereby, and cannot be freed from it whatever may befal me hereafter, or ensue upon it.

The third moving in the body of God in this world is hidden. In it is the almighty and holy Heart of God, wherein our King, Jesus Christ, with his natural body, sits at the right hand of God, as a King and Lord of the whole body of this world.

The body of Christ is no more in the hard palpability, but in the divine palpability, of nature, like the angels. Our bodies also at the resurrection will have

no more such hard flesh and bones, but be like the angels; and though indeed all forms and powers shall be therein, yet we shall not have the hard palpability.

Christ says to Mary Magdalen in Joseph's garden at the Sepulchre, after his resurrection, *Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my God and to your God,* as if he would say, I have not now the animal body any more, although I show myself to thee in my form or shape which I had, because otherwise thou in thy animal body couldst not see me.

So during the forty days after his resurrection he did not always walk visibly among the disciples, but invisibly, according to his heavenly and angelical property. When he would speak or talk with his disciples, then he showed himself in a palpable manner and form, that thereby he might speak natural words with them, for corruption cannot apprehend the divine. Also it sufficiently appears that his

body was of an angelical kind, in that he went to his disciples through the doors, being shut.

Thus thou must know that his body unites with all the seven spirits in nature in the astral moving in the part of love; and holds sin, death and the Devil captive in its wrath part.

Thou seest also how thou art in this world everywhere in heaven and also in hell, and dwellest between heaven and hell in great danger. Thou seest how heaven is in a holy man, and that everywhere, wheresoever thou standest, goest or liest, if thy spirit does but co-operate with God, then as to that part thou art in heaven and thy soul is in God. Therefore says Christ: My sheep are in my hands, no man can pull them away from me.

In like manner thou seest also how thou art always in hell among all the devils as to the wrath; if thine eyes were

but open thou wouldst see wonderful things, but thou standest between heaven and hell, and canst see neither of them, and walkest upon a very narrow bridge.

Some men have many times, in the astral spirit, entered in thither, being ravished in an ecstasy, as men term it, and have in this life known the gates of heaven and of hell, and have shown and declared how that many men dwell in hell with their living bodies. Such indeed have been scorned, derided or laughed at, but with great ignorance and indiscretion, for it is just so as they declare.

CHAPTER V

* * *

THE Simple says, God made all things out of nothing; but he knows not God, neither does he know what he himself is. When he beholds the earth together with the deep above the earth, he thinks verily all this is *not* God; or else he thinks God is *not there.* He always imagines with himself that God dwells only above the azure heaven of the stars, and rules, as it were, by means of some spirit which goes forth from him into this world; and that his body is not present here upon the earth or in the earth.

Just such opinions and tenets I have read also in the books and writings of Doctors, and there are also very many opinions, disputations and controversies risen about this very thing among the Learned.

But seeing God opens to me the gate of his Being in his great love, and remembers the covenants which he has with man, therefore I will faithfully and earnestly, according to my gifts, set wide open all the gates of God, so far as he will give me leave.

It is not so to be understood, as that I am sufficient in these things, but only so far as I am able to comprehend.

For the Being of God is like a wheel, wherein many wheels are made one in another, upwards, downwards, crossways, and yet continually turn all of them together.

At which indeed, when a man beholds the wheel, he highly marvels, and cannot at once in its turning learn to conceive and apprehend it. But the more he beholds the wheel the more he learns its form; and the more he learns the greater longing he has towards the wheel, for he continually sees something that is more

and more wonderful, so that a man can neither behold nor learn it enough.

Thus I also. What I do not fully describe in one place concerning this great mystery, that you will find in another place; and what I cannot describe here in regard of the greatness of this mystery and my incapacity, that you will find elsewhere.

For here is the first sprouting or vegetation of this twig, which springs in its mother, and is as a child which is learning to walk and is not able to run apace at the first.

Though the spirit sees the wheel and would fain comprehend its form in every place, yet it cannot do it exactly enough because of the turning of the wheel. But when it comes about that the spirit can see the first apprehended form again, then continually it learns more and more, and always loves and delights in the wheel, and longs after it still more and more.

Now observe: The earth has just such qualities and quality-expressing or fountain spirits as the deep above the earth, or as heaven has, and all of them together belong to one only body. The universal God is that one only body. But sin is the cause that thou does not wholly see and know him. With and by sin thou, within this great divine body, liest shut up in the mortal flesh; and the power and virtue of God is hidden from thee, even as the marrow in the bones is hidden from the flesh.

But if thou in the spirit breakest through the death of the flesh, then thou seest the hidden God. For the mortal flesh belongs not to the moving of life, so it cannot receive or conceive the Life of the Light as proper to itself; but the Life of the Light in God rises up in the flesh and generates to itself, from out of it, another, a heavenly and living, body, which knows and understands the Light.

The mortal body is but a husk from

which the new body grows, as it is with a grain of wheat in the earth. The husk shall not rise and be living again, no more with the body than with the grain, but will remain for ever in death.

Behold the mystery of the earth: as that brings forth so must thou bring forth. The earth is not that body which is brought forth, but is the mother of that body; as also thy flesh is not the spirit but is the mother of the spirit.

And in both of them, in the earth and in thy flesh, the Light of the clear Deity is hidden, and it breaks through and gathers to itself a body for each after its kind.

As the mother is, so also is the child: man's child is the soul which is born in the astral moving from the flesh; and the earth's child is the grass, the herbs, the trees, silver, gold, and all mineral ores.

Out of the earth sprang grass, herbs and trees; and in the earth silver, gold, and all

manner of ore came to be. In the deep above the earth sprang the wonderful forming of power and virtue.

I now invite all lovers of the holy and highly to be esteemed arts of philosophy and theology before this mirror wherein I lay open the root and ground of these matters.

I use not their tables, formulas, or schemes, rules and ways, for I have not learned from them. I have another teacher, which is the living fountain of nature.

What could I, simple layman, teach or write of their high art if it was not given to me by the Spirit of nature, in whom I live and am? Should I oppose the Spirit that he should not open where and in whom he pleases?

O thou child of man, open the eyes of thy spirit, for I will show thee here the right and real proper gate of God.

Behold! that is the true, one, only God out of whom thou art created and in whom thou livest; and when thou beholdest the deep and the stars and the earth, then thou beholdest thy God. In that same thou livest and hast thy being; and that same God rules thee also, and from that same God thou hast thy senses. Thou art a creature from him and in him; else thou wouldst never have been.

Now perhaps thou wilt say that I write in a heathenish manner. Hearken and behold! Observe the distinct understanding how all this is so; for I write not heathenishly, but in the love of wisdom; neither am I a heathen, but I have the true knowledge of the one only great God who is All.

When thou beholdest the deep, the stars, the elements and the earth, then thou comprehendest not with thine eyes the bright and clear Deity, though indeed he is there and in them; but thou seest

and comprehendest, with thine eyes, first death and then the wrath of God.

But if thou liftest up thy thoughts and dost consider where God is, then thou shalt comprehend the astral moving, where love and wrath move one against another. And when by faith thou drawest near to God who rules in holiness in this dominion, then thou layest hold on him in his holy Heart.

When this is done, then thou art as God is, who himself is heaven, earth, stars and the elements.

CHAPTER VI

* * *

WHERE will you seek for God? Seek him in your soul that is proceeded out of the eternal nature, the living fountain of forces wherein the divine working stands.

O that I had but the pen of a man, and were able therewith to write down the spirit of knowledge! I can but stammer of great mysteries like a child that is beginning to speak; so very little can the earthly tongue express of that which the spirit comprehends. Yet I will venture to try whether I may incline some to seek the pearl of true knowledge, and myself labour in the works of God in my paradisical garden of roses; for the longing of the eternal nature-mother drives me on to write and to exercise myself in this my knowledge.

No money, nor goods, nor art, nor power can bring you to the eternal rest of the eternal paradise, but only the knowledge in which you may steep your soul. That is the pearl which no thief can steal away; seek after it and you will find the noble treasure.

Our skill and understanding are so cramped and narrowed that we have no more any knowledge of paradise at all. And except we be born anew, the veil of Moses lies continually before our eyes, and we suppose that was paradise whereof he said: God placed Adam in the garden of Eden which he had planted, that he might till it.

O beloved man, paradise is the divine Joy. It is the divine and angelical Joy, yet it is not outside the place of this world. When I speak of the fountain and joy of paradise, and of its substance, what it is, I have no similitude for it in this world; I stand in need of angelical speech and knowledge to express it; and though

I had them yet I could never express it with this tongue. It is well understood in the mind, when the soul rides in the chariot of the Spirit, but I cannot express it with the tongue; yet will I stammer with the children till another mouth be given me to speak with.

And seeing somewhat is lent me from the grace of the power of God, that I might know the way to paradise, seeing also that it behoves everyone to work the works of God in which he stands, I will not neglect my task but will labour as much as I can on the way.

Although I shall scarce be able to spell out the letters in this so high a way, yet my labour shall be enough that many will have to learn in it all their life long. He that thinks he knows it well, he has not yet learnt the first letter of paradise, for no Doctors are to be found in this school, but only learners.

There is nothing that is nearer to you

than heaven, paradise, and hell. Unto which of them you are inclined and towards which of them you walk, to that in this lifetime you are most near. There is a moving between each two of them; and you have both movings in you. God beckons to you in the one, and calls you; and the Devil beckons to you in the other, and calls you; with whom you go, with him you enter in. The Devil has in his hand power, honour, pleasure, and worldly happiness; and the root of these is death and hell-fire. God has in his hands crosses, persecution, misery, poverty, ignominy and sorrow; and the root of these is a fire also. But in this fire there is a light, and in the light virtue and in the virtue paradise. In paradise are the angels, and among the angels is Joy. Dim and fleshly eyes cannot behold it; but when the Holy Ghost comes into the soul it is born anew in God, and then it becomes a child of paradise and has the

key of paradise, and sees into the midst thereof.

If you be born of God, then you understand God, paradise, the kingdom of heaven and hell, the entrance thereinto of the creatures and the creation of this world; but if not, then the veil is before your eyes as it was before the eyes of Moses. Therefore saith Christ: *Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.*

If you do not understand this writing, seek the humble lowly Heart of God, and that will bring a small seed from the tree of paradise into your soul; and if you abide in patience then a great tree will grow out of that seed, as you will think has come to pass with this author. For he is to be esteemed as a very simple person, in comparison of the great learned men; but Christ saith: My power is strong in the weak; yea Father, it hath so pleased thee to hide these things from the wise

and prudent, and thou hast revealed them to babes and sucklings; the wisdom of this world is foolishness in thy sight. And although now the children of the world are wiser in their generation than the children of light, yet their wisdom is but a corruptible thing, and this wisdom continues eternally.

Seek for the noble pearl; it is much more precious than this whole world; it will never more depart from you. Where the pearl is, there will your heart be also; you need not in this life seek any further after paradise, joy and heavenly delight; seek but the pearl, and when you find that, then you find paradise and the kingdom of heaven.

I have perused many masterpieces of writing, hoping to find the high and deep wisdom of God, the pearl of the understanding of man; but I could find nothing of that which my soul lusted after. I have found very many contrary opinions,

and at times I have found some who forbid me to search, but I cannot know with what reason except it be that the blind grudge at the eyes of them that see.

With all this my soul is become very disquiet within, and has been as full of pain and anguish as a woman at her travail; and yet to no end till I followed the words of Christ when he said: You must be born anew, if you will see the kingdom of God. This at first confounded me; I supposed that such a thing could not be done in this world, but only at my departure out of this world. And then my soul was at first in anguish, longing after the pearl; but, yielding itself, at last obtained the jewel. Therefore I will write, for a memorial to myself and for a light to them that seek. For Christ said: None lights a candle and puts it under a bushel, but sets it upon a table that all that are in the house may see by the light of it. To this end he gives the pearl and divine

wisdom and knowledge to them that seek, that they should impart it to the desirous for their healing, as he has very earnestly commanded.

Indeed Moses writes that God made man of the dust of the earth. And that is the opinion of very many. I also should not have known how that was to be understood, and I should not have learned it out of Moses, nor out of the glosses put upon his words. The veil would have continued still before my eyes, though I was much troubled thereby. But when I found the pearl, then I looked Moses in the face, and found that he had wrote very right, but that I had not rightly understood it.

Now the question is: What is God's image? Behold, and consider the Deity, and then you will light upon it. God is not an animal man; and man should be the image and similitude of God, wherein God may dwell. God is a spirit; three

principles are in him, that is, the sources and powers of the darkness, of the light, and of this world. He would make such an image as should have all these three and so be rightly a similitude of himself. Therefore Moses may be well understood to say that God created man and did not make him of a lump of earth. But the forming power in which God created him is the matrix of the earth, out of which the earth was generated; and the matter in which he created him is a quintessence of the stars and elements, and came forth from the heavenly matrix which is also the root of the earth.

Now the soul stands in two gates, and touches two principles, the eternal darkness and the eternal light of the Son of God, as God the Father himself does. Thus it may be in heaven and in paradise, and enjoy the unutterable joy of God the Father which he has in his Son,

and it may hear the inexpressible words of the Heart of God.

There the soul feeds on all the words of God, for these are the food of its life; and it sings the paradisical songs of praise concerning the pleasant fruit of paradise which grows in the divine virtue and is the food of the heavenly and eternal body.

Can this be no joy and rejoicing? Should not that be a pleasant thing, to eat heavenly bread with the many thousand sorts of angels, and to rejoice in their communion and fellowship? What can possibly be named which can be more pleasant? Where there is no fear, no anger, no death; where every voice and speech is of the divine salvation, power, strength and might; and this voice going forth into eternity. There is the place where Paul heard words unutterable that no man can express.

CHAPTER VII

* * *

THANKS be to God who has regenerated me, by water and the Holy Ghost, to be a living creature, so that I can in his Light see my great inbred vices, which are in my flesh.

Thus now I live in the spirit of this world in my flesh, and my flesh serves the spirit of this world; but my mind serves God. My flesh is generated in this world and is ruled by the quintessence of the stars and elements, which dwells in it and is master of the body and the outward life; but my mind is regenerated in God and loves God. And although I cannot now comprehend and hold fast the divine wisdom, because my mind falls into sins, yet the spirit of this world shall not always thus hold captive my mind.

For the Virgin, the divine Wisdom, has given me her promise not to leave me in any misery; she will come to help me in the Son of Wisdom. I must hold fast to him, and he will bring me to her in paradise. I will make the venture, and go through the thistles and thorns as well as I can, till I find my native country where Wisdom dwells. I rely upon her faithful promise, when she appeared to me, that she would turn all my mourning into great joy. When I lay upon the mountain at midnight, so that all the trees fell upon me and all the storms and winds beat upon me, and Antichrist gaped at me with his open jaws to devour me, then she came and comforted me and took me for her own.

Therefore I am but the more cheerful, and care not for him; he rules over me no further than over the transitory house of flesh, whose patron he is; he may take that quite away, but so I shall come into my native country. Yet he is not absolute

lord over that house, he is but God's ape; for as an ape plays all manner of tricks and pranks to make itself sport, and would fain seem to be the finest and the nimblest of beasts, so also does he. His power hangs on the great tree of this world, and a storm of wind can blow it away.

Thou wilt ask, What is the new regeneration? or how is that done in man? Hear and see, close not thy mind, let it not be filled by the spirit of this world with its might and pomp. Lay hold upon thy mind and break through the spirit of this world entirely; yield thy mind unto the kind love of God; make thy purpose earnest and strong to overcome the pleasure of this world and not to regard it. Consider that thou art not at home in this world, but art a strange guest, made captive in a prison; cry and call to him who has the key of the prison; yield thy-

self up to him in obedience, righteousness, humility, purity and truth. And seek not so eagerly after the kingdom of this world; it will stick close enough to thee without that. Then the pure Virgin, the Wisdom of God, will meet thee in the height and depth of thy mind, and will lead thee to him who has the key to the gate of the deep. Thou must stand before him and he will give thee to eat of the heavenly manna which will quicken and refresh thee. Thou wilt be strong, and wilt break through the gate of the deep as the morning star, and though thou liest captive here in the night yet the rays of the dawn will appear to thee in paradise, where thy pure Virgin stands, waiting for thee with the joy of the angels, who will kindly receive thee in thy newborn mind and spirit. And though indeed here thou must walk, as to thy body, in the dark night, yet the noble Virgin will help thee still.

Look well to it, close not thy mind and understanding; when thy mind says, Turn, then know that so thou art called by the Wisdom of God; turn instantly, and consider where thou art lodged, in how hard a house of bondage thy soul lies imprisoned; seek thy native country from whence thy soul is wandered and whither it should return again.

Then if thou wilt follow the counsel of the Wisdom of God thou wilt find in thyself, not only after this life, but also in this life in thy regeneration, that Wisdom will very worthily meet thee. And thou wilt see out of what kind of spirit this author has wrote.

CHAPTER VIII

* * *

MY beloved Reader, I tell thee this, that everything has its impulse in its own form. It always makes that very thing with which the spirit is impregnated; and the body must always labour in that wherein the spirit is kindled. When I consider and think why I thus write many wonders and leave them not for other sharper wits, I find that my spirit is kindled in this matter whereof I write; for there is a living running fire of these things in my spirit, and thereupon (let me purpose what I will) yet they continually come uppermost, so that I am made captive thereby, and it is laid upon me as a work which I must do. Therefore, seeing it is my work wherein my spirit drives, I will write it

down for a memorial in such a manner as I know it in my spirit and as I attained to it; I will set down no other thing than that I myself have tried and known, that I be not found a liar before God.

Now, then, if there be any that have a desire to follow me and would fain have the knowledge whereof I write, I advise him to accompany me in this way, not at present with the pen, but with the labour of his mind; and then he shall find how I could come to write thus.

Seeing I have in hand the matter of repentance, therefore I certify the reader that in my earnestness this pen was given me, which the Oppressor would have broke. With him I began an earnest fight, insomuch that he would have cast me down to the ground under his feet had not the Spirit of God helped me, so that now I stand up.

Therefore, if we will speak of this most

serious matter, we must go from Jerusalem to Jericho, and see how we lie among murderers who have so wounded and beaten us that we are half dead; and must look about us for the Samaritan with his beast, that he may dress our wounds and bring us into his inn. O how lamentable and miserable it is, that although we are so beaten by the murderer that we are half dead, yet we feel our smart no more! Oh, if the physician would come and dress our wounds, that our soul might revive and live, how we should rejoice! Thus speaks desire, and has such longing heartfelt wishes; yet although the physician is here, the mind can in no wise apprehend him, because it is so much wounded and lies half dead.

My dear Mind, thou supposest thou art very sound, but thou art so beaten that thou feelest thy disease no more. Art thou not very near unto death? How then canst thou account thyself to be

sound? O my dear Soul, boast not of thy soundness. Thou liest fettered in heavy bonds, yea, in a very dark dungeon; thou swimmest in a deep water which rises up to thy very lips, and thou must continually expect death. Besides, the Oppressor, thine own corrupt nature, is behind thee with a great company of thy worst enemies, whereby he draws thee continually down by his chains towards the horrible deep, the abyss of hell; and his crew assault thee, and run upon thee on all sides, as hounds upon their quarry.

Then says Reason, Why do they so? O my dear Soul, they have great cause for it; thou hast been their hind, and thou art broken out of their park; besides thou art so strong that thou hast broken down their park-wall and taken possession of their dwelling. Thou art their worst enemy and they thine; and if thou wast but gone out of their enclosure they would be content, but thou being in it

still the strife continues, and has no end till the Ancient of Days comes, who will part you asunder.

Dost thou suppose that I am mad that I write thus. If I did not see and know it I should be silent. Dost thou still say thou art in the garden of roses? If thou thinkest thou art there, see well whether thou art not in the Devil's pasture, and art his most beloved hind which he fattens to the slaughter for his food.

O dear Soul, turn, and let not the Devil capture thee; regard not the scorn of the world; all thy sorrow must be turned into great joy. And though in this world thou hast not great honour, power and riches, that is nothing; thou knowest not whether to-morrow it will come to be thy turn to die. Why then dost thou contend and strive so much after worldly honour that is transitory? Rather endeavour after the tree of paradise, which thou mayst carry with thee and wherein thou shalt

rejoice eternally for its growth and fruit.

Oh! is not that a blessed welfare when the soul dares to look into the Holy Trinity, wherewith it is filled, so that its powers grow and blossom in paradise, where songs of praise break forth, where the ever-growing fruit springs up endlessly according to thy desire, where there is no fear, envy, nor sorrow, where there is love one of another, where everyone rejoices in the form and beauty of another?

Beloved Mind, if thou hast a desire to this way and wouldst attain it, then thou must use great earnestness; it must be no lip-labour, with the heart elsewhere. No, thou canst not attain it thus. Thou must collect thy mind with all thy purposes and reason, wholly together in one will and resolution, and desire to turn from thy abominations; and thou must set thy thoughts upon God and goodness with a steadfast confidence in his mercy. Then thou wilt attain it.

Thou must continue steadfast in this resolute purpose; and though thou gainest no strength into thy heart, and though the Devil should beat down thy tongue so that thou canst not pray to God, yet thou must continually hold and go on in this thought and purpose. The more thou pressest forward the weaker the Devil is; the more earnestly thou pressest forth from the Devil and thy sins, the more mightily does the kingdom of God press into thee. Have a care that thou dost not depart from this thy will before thou hast received the jewel, the pearl of divine wisdom and knowledge; though it holds off from morning till night, and still from day to day, if thy earnestness be great, then thy jewel will also be great which thou shalt receive in thy victory.

None knows what it is but he that has found it by experience. It is a most precious guest; when it enters into the soul there is a very wonderful triumph there; the bridegroom embraces his be-

loved bride, the hallelujah of paradise sounds. Oh! must not the earthly body needs tremble and shake at it? Yet though it knows not what it is, all its members rejoice. What beauteous knowledge does the Virgin of the Divine Wisdom bring with her! She makes learned indeed; and though one were dumb, yet the soul is crowned in God's works of wonder, and must speak of his wonder; there is nothing in the soul but longing to do so; the Devil must begone, he is quite weary and faint.

Thus the seed of paradise is sown. But observe it well; it is not instantly become a tree. How many storms must the soul undergo and endure! How often is it overwhelmed by sins! For all in this world is against it, it is as it were left alone and forsaken; even the children of God themselves assault it; and the Devil does plague the poor soul, trying to lead it astray, either with flattery that it may

flatter itself or else with the burden of sins in the conscience. He never ceases, and thou must always strive against him; for so the tree of paradise grows, as corn does in the tempestuous winds. If it grows high and comes to blossom, then thou wilt enjoy the fruit; and thou wilt understand better what this pen has written and what moved me to write. For I was a long time in this condition, many storms went over my head. Therefore this shall be for a lasting memorial and continual remembrance to me.

Now, says Reason, I see no more in thee, nor in any such as thou art, than in other poor sinners; thine must needs be but a hypocritical pretence; besides, says Reason, I also have been in such a way, and yet remain in wickedness still and do that which I would not do; I am still moved to anger, covetousness and malice. What is the matter that a man does not perform what he purposes, but that he

does even what himself reproves in others, and that which he knows is not right?

Here the tree of paradise is not discerned. Behold, my beloved Reason, this tree is not sown into the outward man, he is not worthy of it, he belongs to the earth; and the poor soul is often brought into sins to which it does not consent, the body being drawn into that which the soul rejects. Now when this is so, it is not the soul that works it. The soul says, This is not right, nor well; but the body says, We must have it that we may live and have enough. So it is, one time after another. And a true Christian knows not himself; how then should he be known by others? Also the Devil can hide him sufficiently that he may not be known; that is his masterpiece, when he can bring a true Christian into wickedness, to fall into sins, while this is not discerned by him, but he reproves the

sins of others yet is sinning, outwardly, himself.

I do not say that sin in the old man is no hurt; though indeed it cannot sway the new man yet it scandalizes him. We must with the new man live to God and serve him, though it is not possible to be perfect in this world; we must continually go on and hold out: the new man is in a field where the ground is cold, bitter, sour and void of life.

CHAPTER IX

* * *

THOU Sophister, I know thou wilt accuse me of pride because I saw so far into the Deep. But it is said that you look only upon the wisdom of this world: I do not esteem it or care for it; it affords me no joy at all. I rejoice at this, that my soul moveth in wonders to the praise of God, so that I know his wondrous works, in which my soul delighteth.

Now, since I know the wonders shall I be silent? Am I not born to this, as are all creatures, that I should open the wonders of God? Therefore now I labour in my work and another in his; and thou, proud Sophister, in thine.

We stand all in God's field, and we grow to God's glory and to his works of

wonder, as well the wicked as the godly. But every fruit groweth in its own manner: when the mower shall cut it down, then every fruit shall come into its own barn, each receiveth that which is its own. Then the field in its nature, out of which each is grown, shall be made manifest; there are two centres in eternity, the love and the wrath, and each centre brings forth its own crop.

Therefore consider, O man, what you condemn, that you fall not upon the sword of the Spirit of God, and that your work be not consumed in the fire of wrath.

Thou, Sophister, runnest on wittingly to the Devil, for thine own profit, for thy transitory voluptuousness and honour, and does not see the open gate which the Spirit showeth thee. If thou wilt not, then it is as was said: *We have piped unto you but ye have not danced.* We have called you, but you are not come to us;

I have been hungry after you, but you have not fed me; you are not grown in my garden of roses, therefore you are none of my food; your heart hath not been found in my praise, therefore you are not my food. And the bridegroom passeth by; then cometh the other, and gathereth what he findeth into his barn.

O dear children, if you understood this, how would you tread underfoot the contentions of the Sophisters! Much consisteth therein which shall hereafter be shown you, so far as we ought; let none be wilfully blinded, nor be offended by the simplicity of this hand.

If we will enter into the kingdom of heaven we must be children, and not cunning and wise in the understanding of this world; we must depart from our earthly reason and enter into obedience to our eternal first Mother. So we shall receive the spirit and life of our

Mother, and then also we shall know her habitation.

No wit of our own attaineth the crown of the mystery of God. It is indeed revealed in the writings of the Saints, but the spirit of this world apprehendeth it not. No Doctors, though they have studied ever so much, have any ability in their own wit to attain the crown of God's hidden mysteries.

No one can in his own power apprehend anything of the depths of God and teach it to another; all are children and scholars in their A B C. Although I write and speak in high fashion thereof, yet the understanding is not my own; the spirit of the Mother speaketh out of her children what it will; it revealeth itself in many ways, in one otherwise than in another, for its wondrous wisdom is a deep without measure, and you should not marvel that the children of God have not one manner of speech and word,

for each speaketh out of the wisdom of the eternal Nature-Mother whose diversity is infinite.

But the goal is the Heart of God; they all run thither, and herein lies the test whereby you shall know whether the spirit of a man speaketh from God or from the Devil.

Hereby we know that we are God's children and generated of God. God is himself the Being of all beings; and we are as Gods in him, through whom he revealeth himself.

Now therefore I set before you the ground of the heavens, the stars and elements, that you may see what is heavenly and what is earthly, what is transitory and mortal, and what is eternal and enduring. To which end I have now purposed to myself to write; not to boast of my high knowledge but out of love in Christ, as a servant and minister of Christ.

For the Lord hath both the willing and the doing in his hands; I am able to do nothing; also my earthly reason understandeth nothing: I am yielded into our Mother's bosom and do as the Mother showeth me; I know not from anybody else, I am not born with knowledge from the wisdom of this world, neither do I understand it; but what is bestowed upon me that I bestow again. I have no other purpose herein, neither do I know to what end I must write these high things: what the Spirit showeth me, that I set down.

Thus I labour in my vineyard, in which the Master of the house hath put me; hoping also to eat of the pleasant sweet grapes, which indeed I have very often received out of the paradise of God. I will so speak as for the use of many, and yet I think I write it but for myself: the fiery driving will have it so as if I did speak of and for many;

and yet I know nothing of this while I write.

Therefore if it shall happen to be read, let none account it for a work of the outward reason; for it hath proceeded from the inward hidden man, according to which this hand hath written it without respect of any person.

I exhort the reader that he will enter into himself and behold himself in the inward man; then I shall be welcome to him. This I speak seriously and faithfully.

When we consider ourselves aright in this knowledge we see clearly that we have been locked up and led as it were blindfold. The wise of this world have shut and barred us up in their art and reason, so that we are made to see with their eyes. And this spirit which hath so long led us captive may well be called Antichrist; I find no other name in the light of nature, which I can call it by, but Antichrist in Babel.

CHAPTER X

* * *

THE law of God and also the way to life is written in our hearts; it lies in no man's supposing, nor in any historical opinion, but in a good will and well doing. The will leadeth us to God or to the Devil; it availeth not that thou hast the name of a Christian, salvation doth not consist therein. A heathen and a Turk is as near to God as thou who art under the name of Christ; if thou bringest forth a false ungodly will in thy deeds, thou art as much without God as a heathen that hath no desire nor will to him. And if a Turk seeketh God with earnestness, though he walketh in blindness, yet he is of the company of those that are children without understanding, and he reacheth to God with the children

which do not yet know what they speak; for this lies not in the knowing but in the will.

We are all blind concerning God; but we put our earnest will into him and into goodness, and so desire him; then we receive him into our will, so that we are born in him in our will.

Dost thou boast of thy calling, that thou art a Christian? Indeed let thy conversation be accordingly, or else thou art but a heathen in the will and in the deed. He that knoweth his Master's will and doeth it not must receive many stripes.

Dost thou not know what Christ said concerning the two sons? When the father says to one of them, Go and do such a thing, and he said he would; and the other said, No; the first went away and did it not, but the other, that said No, went away and did it, and so did the will of his father; the one that was under the name of obedience did it not.

And we are all such, one and another; we bear the name of Christ and are called Christians and are within his covenant: we have said, Yes, we will do it; but they that do it not are unprofitable servants and live without the will of the Father.

But if the Turks, as also the Jews, do the Father's will, who say to Christ, No, and discern him not; who is now their judge to thrust them out from the will of the Father? Is not the Son the Heart of the Father? If they honour the Father they lay hold also on his Heart, for beyond his Heart there is no God.

Dost thou suppose that I encourage them in their blindness that they should go on as they do? No: I show thee thy blindness, O thou that bearest the name of Christ! Thou judgest others, and yet dost the same thing which thou judgest in others, and so thou wilfully bringest the judgement of God upon thyself.

He that saith: Love your enemies, do well to them that persecute you, doth not

teach you to condemn and despise, but he teacheth you the way of meekness; you should be a light to the world, that heathens may see that you are the children of God.

If we consider ourselves according to the true man, who is a similitude and image of God, then we find God in us, yet ourselves without God. And the only remedy consisteth herein, that we enter again into ourselves and so enter into God in our hidden man. If we incline our wills in true earnest singleness of mind to God, then we go with Christ out from this world, out from the stars and elements, and enter into God; for in the will of earthly reason we are children of the stars and elements, and the spirit of this world ruleth over us.

But if we go out from the will of this world and enter into God, then the spirit of God ruleth in us and establisheth us for his children. Then also the garland

of paradise is set upon the soul, and it becometh a child without understanding after this world. It hath lost the ruler of this world, who once ruled it and let it in the earthly reason.

O man! consider who leadeth and driveth thee, for eternally without end is very long. Temporal honour and goods are but dross in the sight of God; it all falleth into the grave with thee and cometh to nothing: but to be in the will of God is eternal riches and honour; there, there is no more care, but our Mother careth for us in whose bosom we live as children.

Thy temporal honour is thy snare and thy misery; in divine hope and confidence is thy garden of roses.

Dost thou suppose again that I speak from hearsay? No, I speak the very life in my own experience; not in an opinion from the mouth of another, but from my own knowledge. I see with my own eyes;

which I boast not of, for the power is the Mother's. I exhort thee to enter into the bosom of the Mother, and learn also to see with thy own eyes: so long as thou dost suffer thyself to be rocked in a cradle and dost desire the eyes of others thou art blind. But if thou risest up from the cradle and dost go to the Mother, then thou shalt discern the Mother and her children.

O how good it is to see with one's own eyes! We are all asleep in the outward man, we lie in the cradle and suffer ourselves to be rocked asleep by the outward reason; we see with the eyes of the dissimulation of our play-actors, who hang bells and baubles about our ears and cradles, that we may be lulled asleep or at least play with baubles, and they may be lords and masters in the house.

Rise up from thy cradle: art thou not a child of the Mother, and moreover a child and lord of the house, and an heir

to its goods? Why sufferest thou thy servants thus to use thee? Christ saith: I am the Light of the World, he that followeth me shall have the light of the eternal life. He doth not direct us to the play-actors, but only to himself. With the inward eyes we must see in his light: so we shall see him, for he is the Light; and when we see him then we walk in the light. He is the Morning Star and is generated in us and riseth in us, and shineth in our bodily darkness.

O how great a triumph is there in the soul when he ariseth! Then a man seeth with his own eyes, and knoweth that he is in a strange lodging, concerning which I here write what I see and know in the light.

I declare unto you that the eternal Being, and also this world, is like man. Eternity bringeth to birth nothing but that which is like itself; as you find man to be, just so is eternity. Consider man

in body and soul, in good and evil, in joy and sorrow, in light and darkness, in power and weakness, in life and death: all is in man, both heaven and the earth, stars, and elements; also the threefold God.

O man! seek thyself and thou shalt find thyself. Open the eyes of thy inward man and see rightly.

This is the noble precious stone, the philosopher's stone, which wise men find. O thou bright crown of pearl, art thou not brighter than the sun? There is nothing like thee; thou art so very manifest, and yet so very secret that among many thousand in this world thou art scarce rightly known of anyone. Yet thou art borne by many that know thee not.

Christ saith, Seek and thou shalt find. The noble stone must be sought for; a lazy man findeth it not; though he carrieth it about with him he knoweth it

not. To whomsoever it revealeth itself, he hath all joy therein, for its virtue is endless. He that hath it doth not give it away; if he doth impart it to any it is not profitable to him that is lazy, who diveth not into its virtue to learn that.

The seeker findeth the stone and its virtue and benefit together. When he findeth it and knows that he is certain of it, there is greater joy in him than the world is able to apprehend; no pen can describe nor any tongue express it in the manner of the world.

It is accounted in the world's eyes the meanest of all stones and is trodden under foot. If a man light upon it he casteth it away as an unprofitable thing. None enquire after it, though there is none upon earth but desires it. All great ones and wise seek it. Indeed they find one and think it the true stone; but they mistake it. They ascribe power and virtue to it and think they have it and will keep it.

But the true stone is not thus: it needeth no virtue to be ascribed to it, all virtue lies hid in it. He who has it, and has knowledge of it, if he seeks, may find all things whatsoever, in heaven and in earth. It is the stone which is rejected of the builders, the chief corner-stone.

O you Sophisters! that out of envy often revile honest hearts according to your own pleasure, how will you be able to stand with those lambs whom you should have led into the fresh green pastures of the way of Christ, into love, purity and humility?

I speak not this out of a desire to reproach any man; I discover only the smoky pit of the Devil that it may be seen what is in man, as well in one as in another, unless he be born anew and resisteth the spirit of the Devil and thrusteth it away from him.

There is another Devil more crafty

and cunning than this, a glistering angel with cloven feet. He, when he seeth a poor soul afraid, and desiring to repent and amend, saith, Pray, and be devout; repent for once in a way. But when the poor soul goes about to pray, he slippeth into his heart and taketh away the understanding of the heart, and putteth it into mere doubting, as if God did not hear it.

So the heart standeth and repeateth over the words of a prayer, as if it were learning to say something without book; and the soul cannot reach the centre of nature; it hath only rehearsed words, not in the spirit of a soul in the centre where the fire is kindled, but only in the mouth, in the spirit of this world. Its words vanish in the air or as those wherein God's name is taken in vain.

There belongeth great earnestness to prayer; for praying is calling upon God, entreating him and speaking with him, going out of the house of sin and enter-

ing the house of God. If the Devil offers to hinder it, then storm his hell. Set thyself against him as he setteth himself against thee, and then thou shalt find what is here told thee. If he opposes strongly, then oppose thou the more strongly; thou hast, in Christ, greater power than he.

Do but fix thy trust and confidence upon the promise of Christ, and let thy storming be grounded in the death of Christ, in his sufferings and wounds, and in his love. Dispute no further about thy sins, for the Devil involveth himself therein and upbraideth thee for them, that thou mightest despair. If thou doubtest of the grace of God thou dost sin greatly, for he is always merciful; there is no other will in him at all but to be merciful. He cannot do otherwise; his arms are spread abroad day and night towards the poor sinner.

Make trial in this manner, and thou wilt quickly see and feel another man,

with another sense and thoughts and understanding. I speak as I know and have found by experience; a soldier knows how it is in the wars. This I write out of love, as one who telleth in the spirit how it hath gone with himself, for an example to others, to try if any would follow him and find out how true it is.

CHAPTER XI

* * *

GOD has set light and darkness before everyone; thou mayest embrace which thou wilt, thou does not thereby move God in his being. His Spirit goes forth from him and meets all those that seek him. Their seeking is his seeking, in which he desireth humanity; for humanity is his image, which he has created according to his whole being, and wherein he will see and know himself. Yea, he dwells in man, why then are we men so long a-seeking? Let us but seek to know ourselves, and when we find ourselves we find all; we need run nowhere to seek God, for we can thereby do him no service; if we do but seek and love one another, then we love God; what we do to one another, that we do to God; whoso-

ever seeketh and findeth his brother and sister hath sought and found God. In him we are all one body of many members, everyone having its own office, government and work; and that is the wonder of God.

Before the time of this world we were known in his wisdom, and he created us that there might be a sport in him. Children are our schoolmasters; in all our wit and cunning we are but fools to them; their first lesson is to learn to play with themselves, and when they grow bigger they play one with another. Thus hath God from eternity in his wisdom, in our hidden childhood, played with us: when he created us in knowledge and skill we should then have played one with another; but the Devil grudged us that and made us fall out at our sport. Therefore it is that we are always at variance, in contention; but we have nothing to contend about but our sport;

when that is at an end we lie down to our rest and go to our own place. Then come others to play and strive and contend also till the evening, till they go to sleep and into their own country out of which they are come.

Dear children, what do we mean that we are so obedient to the Devil? Why do we so contend about a tabernacle which we have not made? Here we contend about a garment, because one brother has a fairer garment than another; are we not all our Mother's children? Let us be obedient children, and then we shall rejoice.

We go into the garden of roses, and there are lilies and flowers enough; we will make a garland for our sister, and then she will rejoice with us; we have a round to dance and we will all hold hands together. Let us be very joyful; there is no more might to hurt us, our Mother taketh care for us. We will go under

the fig-tree, how abundant is its fruit! How fair are the pine trees in Lebanon! Let us be glad and rejoice that our Mother may have joy of us.

We will sing a song of the Oppressor who hath set us at variance. How is he made captive! Where is his power? How poor he is! He domineered over us, but now he is fast bound. O great Power, how art thou thus brought to scorn! Thou that didst fly aloft above the cedars art now laid underfoot and art void of thy power. Rejoice, ye heavens and ye children of God; for he that was our oppressor, who plagued us day and night, is made captive. Rejoice, ye angels of God, for men are delivered, and malice and wickedness laid low.

Dear children and brethren in Christ, let us in this world join our hearts, minds and wills in humility into one love, that we may be one in Christ. If thou art highly advanced to power, authority and

honour, then be humble, despise not the simple and miserable; grind not the oppressed, afflict not the afflicted. If thou art fair, beautiful and comely of body, be not proud; be humble that thy brother and sister may rejoice in thee, and present thy beauty to the praise of God.

Thou that art rich, let thy streams flow into the houses of the miserable that their soul may bless thee.

Dear brethren and sisters in the congregation of Christ, bear with me; let us a little rejoice one with another: I bear a hearty love towards you and speak out of the Spirit of the eternal Wisdom of God.

Christ earnestly teaches us love, humility and mercifulness; and the cause why God is become man is for our salvation and happiness' sake, that we should not turn back from his love: God has spent his heart that we may be his children and remain so for ever. Therefore, dearly beloved children, do not so reject and cast

from you the love and grace of God, else you will lament it for ever. Learn divine wisdom, and learn to know what God is; do not set any image of any thing before you; there is no image of him but in Christ. We live and are in God; we have heaven and hell in ourselves. What we make of ourselves that we are: if we make of ourselves an angel, and dwell in the Light and Love of God in Christ, we are so; but if we make of ourselves a fierce, false and haughty devil which contemns all love and meekness in mere covetousness, greedy hunger and thirst, then also we are so. After this life it is otherwise with us than here; what the soul here embraces that it has there; and so, though the outward breaks in death, yet the will retains that embraced thing as its own and feeds upon it. How that will subsist in the paradise of God and before his angels, you yourself may consider: I would faithfully set it before you for a warning, as it is given to me.

CHAPTER XII

* * *

WHEN Christ asked his disciples, Whom do the people say that the Son of Man is? they answered: Some say thou art Elijah, some, that thou art John the Baptist. Then he asked them and said: Whom say ye that I am? Peter answered him, Thou art Christ the Son of the living God. And he answered them and said, Of a truth, flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father in heaven.

Seeing it is a familiar, intimate and native work to the children of God, wherewith they should exercise themselves daily and hourly, go forth from the earthly reason to enter into the incarnation of Christ, and so in this miserable life be born in the birth of Christ; I have there-

fore undertaken to write of this high mystery, according to my knowledge and gifts, for a memorial. Seeing that I also, together with others the children of God and Christ, stand in this birth, I have undertaken it as an exercise of faith, whereby my soul may thus, as a branch in its tree Jesus Christ, quicken itself from his sap and virtue.

And that not with wise and high eloquence of art, or from the reason of this world, but according to the knowledge which I have from Christ. But though I search sublimely and deep, and shall set it down very clearly, yet this must be said to the reader, that without the Spirit of God it will be to him a hidden mystery.

We should rightly understand the incarnation of Christ, the Son of God, thus: he is not become man in the Virgin Mary only, so that his divinity was confined thereto. No, it is in another manner.

As little as God, who is the fulness of all things, dwells alone in one only place, so little also has God manifested himself by one spark of his light.

God is not measurable; for him is no place found unless he makes a place for himself in a creature; yet he is totally within the creature and without and beyond the creature. He is not divisible, but total everywhere; where he manifests himself there he is totally manifest.

Understand it right: God has longed to become flesh and blood; and although the pure clear Deity continues Spirit, yet it is become the Spirit and Life of flesh and works in the flesh. So we may say that when we with our imagination enter into God, and wholly give up ourselves unto him, we enter into God's flesh and blood and live in God. For the Word is become man, and God is the Word.

We do not thus take away the creature of Christ, that he should not be a crea-

ture; I will give you a similitude thereof in the sun and its lustre and take it thus: in a similitude we liken the sun to the creature of Christ, which is indeed a body; and we liken the whole deep of this world to the eternal Word in the Father.

Now we see plainly that the sun shines in the whole deep, and gives it warmth and power. But we cannot say that in the deep beyond the body of the sun there is not also the power of the sun; if that was not there then would the deep not receive the power and lustre of the sun. One power and one lustre receives the other; the deep with its lustre is hidden.

If God would please, the whole deep would be a mere sun; then would the lustre of the sun shine everywhere.

Know also that I understand that the Heart of God hath rested from eternity; but that with the moving and entering into the Wisdom it is become manifested

in all places; though in God there is neither place nor mark but merely in the creature of Christ, where the total holy Trinity has manifested itself in a creature and so by the creature through the whole heaven.

He is gone thither and has prepared the place for us, where we shall see his light and dwell in his wisdom and share in his divine substantiality.

Were we not in the beginning made out of God's substantiality? Why should we not also abide therein?

For this has the Heart of God moved itself, destroyed death, and regenerated the Life.

Thus now to us the birth and incarnation of Christ is a joyful and very weighty matter. The abyssal Heart of God hath moved itself; and therewith the heavenly substantiality, which was shut up in death, is become living again.

So we may now say with good ground

that God himself hath withstood his anger, and with the centre of his Heart, which filleth eternity, has again opened himself, taken away the power of death, and broke the sting of the fierce wrath, inasmuch as love has opened itself and quenched the power of the fire.

In our imagination we become impregnated of his opened Word and of the power of the heavenly and divine substantiality, which indeed is not strange to us though it seems strange to our earthliness.

The Word has opened itself everywhere, in every man's light of life; and there is wanting only this, that the soul-spirit give itself up thereto. In that soul-spirit God is born.

CHAPTER XIII

* * *

OUTWARD reason saith, How may a man in this world see into God, into another world, and declare what God is? That cannot be: it must needs be a fancy wherewith the man amuses and deceives himself.

Thus far such reason comes: it cannot search further that it might rest; and if I staid in that same art, then would I also say the same; for he who sees nothing says nothing is there; what he sees, that he knows, and further he knows of nothing but that which is before his eyes.

I would have the scorner and wholly earthly man asked whether the heaven is blind, as also hell and God himself.

Or whether there is any seeing in the divine world; whether also the Spirit

of God sees both in the love-light world and in the fierce wrath in the anger-world.

Does he say there is a seeing therein? as indeed is very true: then he should look to it that he himself does not often see with the Devil's eyes in his purposed malice.

If he would drive the Devil out, then he would see his great folly which the Devil has prompted him to. Yet he is so blinded that he knows not that he sees with the Devil's eyes.

In like manner the holy man sees with God's eyes; what God purposes, that the Spirit of God in the new birth sees out of the right human eyes of the image of God. It is to the wise a seeing and also a doing.

In the way through the death of Christ the new man sees into the angelical world; it is to him much easier and clearer to apprehend than the earthly

world; it is done naturally, not with fancying but with seeing eyes, with eyes of that spirit which goes forth out of the soul's fire.

That spirit sees into heaven; it beholds God and eternity. It is the noble image according to the similitude of God.

Out of such seeing has this pen written, not from other masters, nor out of conjecture whether it be true or no.

Though now indeed a creature is but a piece and not a total consummation, so that we see only in part, yet what is written here is to be searched into, and is fundamental.

The Wisdom of God suffers not itself to be written, for it is endless, without number and comprehension; we know only in part.

And though indeed we know much more, yet the earthly tongue cannot exalt itself and declare it: it speaks only words of this world and not words of the in-

ward world, though the mind retains them in the hidden man.

Therefore one always understands otherwise than another, according as each is endued with the Wisdom; and so also he apprehends and explains it.

Everyone will not understand my writings according to my meaning and sense; indeed there may not be one who does so; but everyone will understand according to his gifts, for his benefit; one more than another, according as the Spirit has its property in him.

For the Spirit of God is often subject to the spirits of men, if they will that which is good or well; and it furthers what man wills, that his good work be not hindered, but that everywhere, above all, God's willing and desire be done.

What is there now that is strange to us or in us, that we cannot see God? This world and the Devil are the cause that we

see not with God's eyes, else there is no hindrance.

Now if anyone saith I see nothing divine, he should consider that flesh and blood, together with the subtlety and craft of the Devil, is oftentimes a hindrance to him, in that he willeth in his high-mindedness for his own honour to see God, and oftentimes in that he is filled and blinded with earthly malignity.

Let him look into the footsteps of Christ and enter into a new life, and give himself to be under the Cross of Christ, and desire only the entrance of Christ into himself; what shall hinder him then from seeing the Father, his Saviour Christ, and the Holy Spirit?

Is the Holy Spirit blind when he dwells in man? Or write I this for my own boasting?

Not so, but that the reader may forsake his error, and that with the divine eyes he may see the wonders of God, and so God's

will may be done. To which end this pen has written very much, and not for its own honour or for the sake of the pleasures of this life.

Dear children of God, you who seek with much sighing and tears, I say to you in earnest sincerity: Our sight and knowledge is in God; he manifests to everyone in this world as much as he will, as much as he knows is profitable for the man.

He that sees from God, he has God's work to manage; he should and must order, speak, and do that which he sees, else his sight will be taken from him; for this world is not worthy of God's vision.

But for the sake of the wonders and of the revelation of God it is given to many to see; that the Name of God may be manifested to the world. We are not our own, but his whom we serve in his light. We know nothing of God; he, God himself, is our knowing and seeing; we are nothing that he may be all in us. We

should be blind, deaf and dumb, and know no life in us, that he may be our life and vision, and our work be his.

If we have done anything that is good our tongue should not say. This have we done, but, This hath the Lord in us done; his name be highly praised.

But what does this evil world now? If anyone says, This has God in me done; if it be good, then saith the world, Thou fool! thou hast done it; God is not in thee; thou liest. Thus they make fool and liar of the Spirit of God.

When you see that the world fighteth against you, persecutes you, despises, slanders you because of your knowledge and the Name of God, then consider that you have the black Devil before you. Then sigh, and long that God's kingdom may come to us, and the Devil's sting may be destroyed, that the man, so influenced by the Devil, may through your longing, sighing and prayer be released. Then you

labour rightly in God's vineyard and prevent the Devil of his kingdom.

In love and meekness we become newborn out of the wrath of God; in love and meekness we must strive and fight against the Devil in this world. For love is his poison; it is a fire of terror to him wherein he cannot stay. If he knew the least spark of love in himself he would cast it away, or would destroy himself that he might be rid of it. Therefore is love and meekness our sword, wherewith we can fight with the Devil and the world.

Love is God's fire; the Devil and the world are an enemy to it. Love hath God's eyes and sees in God; anger has the eyes of the fierce wrath that sees in hell, in torment and in death.

The world supposes merely that a man must see God with the earthly and the starry eyes; it knows not that God dwells in the inward and not in the outward.

If it sees nothing admirable or wonder-

ful in God's children it says, Oh, he is a fool, he is an idiot, he is melancholy; thus much it knows.

O hearken, I know well what melancholy is; I know also well what is from God. I know them both, and thee also in thy blindness; but such knowledge is not purchased by melancholy, only by a wrestling to victory.

It is given to none without striving, unless he is a vessel chosen of God; otherwise he must strive for the garland.

Indeed many a man is chosen to it in his mother's womb, chosen to open and disclose the wonders which God intends; but not all are chosen thus. Many are accepted out of their zealous seeking; for Christ saith, Seek and ye shall find, knock and so it will be opened unto you. Also, whosoever come to me, those I will not cast out.

Herein lies the seeing out of Christ's spirit, out of God's kingdom, in the

power of the Word, with the eyes of God and not with the eyes of this world and of the outward flesh.

Thus, thou blind world, know wherewith we see when we speak and write of God, and let thy false judging alone: see thou with thine eyes and let God's children see with their eyes; see from out thy gifts, let another see from out his gifts.

As everyone is called, so let him see; and so let him converse. We manage not all one and the same conversation, but everyone according to his gift, and his calling to serve God's honour and wonders.

The Spirit of God suffers not itself to be tied or bound up, as outward reason supposes, with decrees, canons and councils, whereby always one chain of Antichrist is linked to another so that men come to judge about God's Spirit, and to hold their own conceits or opinions to be God's covenant, as if God was not at

home in this world, or as if they were Gods upon earth.

I say that all such compacts and binding is Antichrist and unbelief, let it seem or flatter how it will. God's Spirit is unbound, he enters not into such compacts or obligations, but enters freely the seeking, humble, lowly mind, according to its gift and capacity.

He is also even subjected to it, if it does but earnestly desire him; what then can institutions in human wit and prudence of this world do for that mind, since it belongs to the honour of God?

Friendly conference and colloquy is very good and necessary, wherein one presents or imparts his gifts to another; but compacts are a chain against God.

God has once made one covenant with us in Christ; that is enough for eternity, he makes no more. He has once taken mankind into the covenant and sealed it by blood and death; there is enough in that.

It is not so slight a thing to be a right true Christian, it is the very hardest thing of all; the will must be a soldier, and fight against the corrupted will. It must sink itself down out of the earthly reason into the death of Christ, and break the power of the earthly will.

This must be with so hardy and bold a courage that it will hazard the earthly life upon it and not give over till it has broke the earthly will; which indeed has been a strong battle with me.

It is no slight matter to fight for the garland of victory; for no one wins that unless he overcomes; which yet of his own might he cannot do.

He must make his will as it were dead, and so he lives to God and sinks into God's love; though he lives now in the outward kingdom.

I speak of the garland of victory which he getteth in the paradise world if he once presses in; for there the noble seed is sown, and he receives the highly pre-

cious pledge and earnest of the Holy Spirit, which afterwards leads and directs him.

And though he must in this world wander through a dark valley, wherein the Devil and the world's wickedness continually rush and roar tumultuously upon him, and often cast the outward man into evils and so hide the noble seed, yet it will not suffer itself to be kept back.

Thence it sprouts forth, and a tree grows out of it in God's kingdom, despite all the raging and raving of the Devil and his followers and dependents.

And the more the noble tree is cherished, the more swiftly and strongly it grows; it suffers not itself to be destroyed though it costs the outward life.

God is in Christ become man, and the faith-spirit is also in Christ born man. In that the will-spirit converses or walks in God, for it is one spirit with God, and works with God divine works.

And though it may be that the earthly life so hides it that a man knows not his work which he has generated in the faith, yet in breaking the earthly body it will be manifest. Seeing we know this we should let no fear or terror keep us back, for we shall well reap and enjoy eternally. What we have here sown in anguish and weariness, that will comfort us eternally. Amen.

CHAPTER XIV

* * *

WE cannot say that the outward world is God, or the speaking Word; or that the outward man is God. That is only the expressed Word, which has stiffened itself in union with the elements. I say, the inward world is the heaven where God dwells; and the outward world is expressed out of the inward, through the moving of the eternal speaking Word, and enclosed between a beginning and an end.

The inward world abides in the eternal speaking Word. The eternal Word speaks it into Being through Wisdom, out of its own powers, colours, and virtue, as a great mystery from eternity. This Being is a breathing from the Word in the Wisdom; it has the power of generation in itself, and introduces itself into forms,

after the manner of the generation of the eternal Word, or, as I might say, out of the Wisdom in the Word.

Therefore there is nothing nigh unto or far off from God; one world is in the other and all are one as soul and body are in each other, and time and eternity. The eternal speaking Word rules through and over all; it works from eternity to eternity; and though it can neither be apprehended nor conceived, yet its work is conceived, for this is the formed Word, of which the working Word is the life.

The eternal speaking Word is the divine understanding or *sound*. That which is brought forth from the love-desire into forms, that, I say, is the natural and creaturely understanding and sound which was in the Word; as it is said, In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

The harmony of hearing, seeing, feeling, tasting, and smelling, is the true

intellective life. When one power enters into another, then they embrace each other in the sound; and when they are become one they mutually awaken and know each other. In this knowledge consists the true understanding, which, according to the nature of the eternal wisdom, is immeasurable and abyssal, being of the One which is All.

Therefore one only will, if it has divine light in it, may draw from this fountain and behold infinity. From which contemplation this pen has wrote.

In the light of God (which is called the kingdom of heaven) the sound is wholly soft, pleasant, lovely and pure; yea, as a stillness in comparison with our outward gross speaking and sounding. It is as if the mind did play and melodize in a kingdom of joy within itself, and did then hear in a most entire inward manner a sweet, pleasing melody and tune; and yet outwardly did neither hear nor understand it. For in the divine light all is

subtle, in manner as the thoughts play and make mutual melody in one another.

And yet there is a real, intelligible, distinct sound and speech used by the angels, according to their own property, in the kingdom of glory. The powers of the formed and manifested Word, in their love-desire, do introduce themselves, according to the property of all the powers, into an external being, where, as in a mansion, they may act their love-play, and so have somewhat wherewith and wherein mutually to play and melodize one with another, in their wrestling sport of love.

God, who is a Spirit, has by and through his manifestation introduced himself into distinct spirits, which are the voices of his eternal pregnant harmony in the manifested Word of his great kingdom of joy: they are God's instrument, in which his Spirit melodizes in his kingdom of joy; they are angels, the flames of fire and light, in a living, understanding dominion.

We are not to think that the holy angels dwell only above the stars beyond the place of this world, as the outward reason, which knows nothing of God, fancies. Indeed they dwell beyond the dominion of this world, but the place of this world (although there is no place in eternity), and also the place beyond this world, is all one to them. We men see not the angels or the devils with our eyes; yet they are about us and among us. The evil and the good angels dwell near one another, and yet there is the greatest immense distance between them. For heaven is in hell and hell is in heaven, and yet the one is not manifest to the other. Although the Devil should go many millions of miles, desiring to enter heaven and to see it, yet he would still be in hell and not see it.

If evil was not known, joy would not be manifest. But if joy be manifest, then

is the eternal Word spoken in joy, to which end the Word, with nature, has brought itself into a creation. Whosoever rightly sees and understands this has no further question about any thing, for he sees that he lives and subsists in God, and that he may further know and will through him and speak what and how he will. Such a man seeks only the estate of lowliness, that God may alone be accounted high.

My will-spirit, which now is in Christ's humanity, lives in Christ's spirit, that shall in his power give sap to the dry tree, that it may arise in the sound of the trumpet of the divine breath in Christ's voice, which is also my voice in his breath, and spring afresh in paradise. Paradise shall be in me; all whatever God has and is shall appear in me as an image of the divine world's being; all colours, powers and virtues of his eternal Wisdom shall be manifest in me, as in his likeness.

I shall be the manifestation of the divine and spiritual world and an instrument of God's Spirit, wherein he makes melody with himself, with this voice which I myself am. I shall be his instrument, an organ of his expressed Word and Voice; and not only I, but all my fellow-members in the glorious choir and instrument of God. We are all strings in the concert of his joy; the spirit from his mouth strikes the note and tune of our strings.

Therefore God became man, that he might repair his glorious instrument of praise, which would not sound according to the desire of his joy and of his love. He would bring again the true love-sound into the strings; he has brought the voice which sounds in his presence again into us; he is become that which I am and has made me that which he is, so I may say that in my humility I am in him his trumpet and the sound of his instrument and his divine voice.

CHAPTER XV

* * *

I WILL now speak to those who feel indeed in themselves a desire to repent, and yet cannot come to acknowledge and bewail their committed sins; the flesh saying continually to the soul, Stay awhile, it is well enough, or, It is time enough to-morrow; and when to-morrow is come then the flesh says again, To-morrow; the soul in the meanwhile, sighing and fainting, conceiveth neither any true sorrow for the sins it hath committed nor any comfort. Unto such an one, I say, I will write a process or way, which I myself have gone, that he may know what he must do and how it went with me, if peradventure he be inclined to enter into and pursue the same way.

When any man findeth in himself, pressed home upon his mind and con-

science, a hunger or desire to repent, and yet feeleth no true sorrow in himself for his sins which he hath committed, but only an hunger or desire of such sorrow; so that the poor captive soul continually sighs, fears, and must needs acknowledge itself guilty of sins before the judgement of God; such an one, I say, can take no better course than this, namely, to wrap up his senses, mind and reason together, and make to himself instantly, as soon as ever he perceiveth in himself the desire to repent, a mighty strong purpose and resolution that he will that very hour, nay, that minute, immediately enter into repentance, and go forth from his wicked way, not at all regarding the power and respect of the world. Yea, and if it should be required, that he will forsake and disesteem all things for true repentance sake; and never depart from that resolution again though he should be made the fool and scorn of all the world for it; that

with the full bent and strength of his mind he will go forth from the glory and pleasure of the world, and patiently enter into the passion and death of Christ, and set all his hope and confidence upon the life to come; that even now in righteousness and truth he will enter into the vineyard of Christ and therein do the will of God; that in the Spirit and will of Christ he will begin and finish all his actions in this world; and for the sake of Christ's word and promise, which holds forth to us a heavenly reward, willingly take up and bear every adversity and cross, so that he may be admitted into the communion and fellowship of the children of Christ.

He must firmly imagine to himself, wholly wrapping up his soul in this persuasion, that in such his purpose he shall obtain the love of God in Christ Jesus, and that God will give unto him that noble pledge, the Holy Ghost, for an earnest; that in the humanity of Christ he

himself shall be born again, and that the Spirit of Christ will renew his mind with love and power and strengthen his weak faith. Also that in his divine hunger he shall receive the flesh and blood of Christ for food and drink in the desire of his soul, which hungereth and thirsteth after it as its proper nutriment; and with the thirst of the soul drink the water of eternal life out of the pure fountain of Jesus Christ.

He must also wholly and firmly imagine to himself and set before him the great love of God. He must persuade himself that God in Christ will much more readily hear him and receive him to grace than he come; that God in the love of Christ, in the most dear and precious name Jesus, cannot will any evil; and that there is no angry countenance at all in this Name, but only the highest and deepest love and faithfulness, the greatest sweetness of God.

In this consideration he must firmly imagine to himself that this very hour and instant God is really present within and without him. He must know and believe that in his inward man he standeth really before God on whom his soul hath turned its back; and he must, with the eyes of his mind cast down in fear and deepest humility, begin to confess his sins and unworthiness before the face of God in some such manner as the following:

O thou great unsearchable God, Lord of all things; thou who in Christ Jesus, of thy great love towards us, hath manifested thyself in our humanity: I, poor, unworthy, sinful wretch, come before thy presence, though I am not worthy to lift up mine eyes unto thee, acknowledging and confessing that I am guilty of breaking off from thy great love and the grace which thou hast freely bestowed upon us. My soul knoweth not itself because of the mire of sin; but accounteth itself a strange

child before thee, not worthy to desire thy grace.

O God in Christ Jesus, thou who for poor sinners' sake didst become man to help them, to thee I complain. The Devil hath poisoned me so that I know not my Saviour; I am become a wild branch on thy tree. In myself I am become a fool; I am naked and bare, my shame stands before mine eyes, I cannot hide it; thy judgement waiteth for me. What shall I say before thee, who art the Judge of all the world?

O merciful God, it is owing to thy love and longsuffering that I lie not already in hell. I lie before thee as a dying man whose life is passing from his lips, as a spark of life going out; kindle it, O Lord, and lift up the breath of my soul before thee.

A man must bring a serious mind to this work. If ever he would obtain the divine love, and union with the noble

Wisdom of God, he must make an earnest vow in his purpose and mind.

Beloved Reader, out of love to thee I will not conceal from thee what is made known to me. If thou lovest the vanity of the flesh still, and art not in an earnest purpose on the way to the new birth, intending to become a new man, then leave the above-written words in that prayer unspoken; else they will turn to a judgement of God in thee. Thou must not take the holy names in vain; they belong to the thirsty soul. But if thy soul be indeed athirst it shall find by experience what words they are.

Beloved Soul; Christ was tempted in the wilderness, and, if thou wilt put on him, thou must go through his whole progress even from his incarnation to his ascension. Though thou art not able nor required to do that which he hath done, yet thou must enter wholly into his process and therein die continually from corrup-

tion. For the Virgin, the Holy Wisdom, expouseth not herself to the soul except the soul, through the death of Christ, spring up as a new plant, standing in heaven.

Therefore take heed what thou doest: when thou hast made thy promise keep it; then Wisdom will crown thee more readily than thou wouldst be crowned. But thou must be sure, when the Tempter cometh to thee with the pleasure and glory of the world, that thy mind reject it. The free will of thy soul must stand the brunt as a warrior and champion. If the Devil cannot prevail against thy soul with vanity, then he cometh against it with its unworthiness and its catalogue of sins. There thou must fight hard, for in this conflict it goeth so terribly with many a poor sinner that outward reason thinketh him to be distracted, or possessed by an evil spirit. In this kind of combat heaven and hell are fighting one against the other. Yet a soldier who hath

been in the wars can tell how to fight, and can teach another that may be in the like condition.

I have set down here for the help of the reader a very earnest prayer in temptation, that he may know what to do if the same should befall him:

Most deep Love of God in Christ Jesus, leave me not in this distress. I confess I am guilty of the sins which now rise up in my mind and conscience; if thou forsake me I must perish. But hast thou not promised me in thy word, saying, *If a mother could forget her child* (which can hardly be), *yet thou will not forget me*? Thou hast set me as a sign in thy hands which were pierced through with sharp nails, and in thy open side whence blood and water gushed out. Poor wretch that I am! I can in my own ability do nothing before thee; I sink myself down into thy wounds and death; into thee I sink down in the anguish of my conscience; do with me what thou wilt.

Beloved Reader, this is no light matter; he that accounteth it so hath not yet passed through the trial. His conscience is still asleep. Happy is he who passeth through this fire in the time of his youth, before the Devil buildeth up in him a stronghold; he may prove a labourer in the heavenly vineyard, and sow his seed in the garden of Christ, where in due time he shall reap the fruit. This trial continueth a long while with many a poor soul, several years if he do not earnestly and early put on the armour of Christ. But to him who with a firm purpose striveth to depart from his evil ways the temptation will not be so hard, neither will it continue so long. Yet he must stand out valiantly till victory be gotten over the Devil. He shall be mightily assisted, and all shall end in the best for him; so that afterwards, when the day breaketh in his soul, he turneth all to the great praise and glory of God.

CHAPTER XVI

* * *

ALL sorrow, anguish, and fear concerning spiritual things, whereby a man is dejected and terrified in himself, proceedeth from the soul. The outward spirit, which is from the stars and elements, is not thus disturbed and perplexed; because it liveth in its own matrix from which it had its birth. But the poor soul is entered into a strange lodging, into the spirit of this world, which is not its proper home. Whereby that fair creature is obscured and defaced, and is also held captive therein, as in a dark dungeon.

The soul is in its first being a magical fire-source from God's nature. It is an intense and incessant desire after the divine Light.

So then, the soul, being of itself a

hungry magical fire-spirit, desireth spiritual virtue in order to sustain and preserve thereby its fire-life and allay the hunger of its source.

But seeing that the hungry soul, from the mother's womb, is involved in the spirit of the great world and its own temperament; therefore it feedeth, immediately from its birth, yea, even in the mother's womb, of the spirit of this world.

The soul eateth spiritual food according to its temperament; it is the kindling of its fire. The fuel of its fire must be either its temperament or a divine sustenance from God.

Hence we may understand the cause of that infinite variety which there is in the wills and actions of men. Of whatever the soul eateth, wherewith its fire-life is fed, according to that the soul's life is led and governed.

If it goes out from its own temperament into God's love-fire, into the heavenly sub-

stantiality which is Christ's, then it eateth of Christ and of the meekness of the light of his majesty, wherein is the fountain of eternal life.

From thence the soul getteth a divine will, and bringeth the body to do that which, according to its natural inclination and the spirit of this world, it would not do. In such a soul the temperament ruleth not; it bears sway only over the outward body. Such a man hath a continual longing after God.

Oftentimes when his soul eateth of the divine love-essence, it bringeth to him an exulting triumph, and a divine taste into the temperament itself. So that the whole body is thereby affected and even trembleth for joy, being lifted up to such a degree of divine sensation, as if it was on the very borders of paradise.

But this rapturous state rarely continueth long. The soul is soon clouded with somewhat of another nature from

the spirit of this world, of which it maketh a looking-glass wherein it begins to speculate with its outward imagination. Thus it goeth out from the Spirit of God and is often bemired in the dirt of the world, if the Virgin of Divine Wisdom doth not call it back again to repent and return to its first love. Then, if the soul washeth itself anew in the water of eternal life, through earnest repentance, it becometh renewed again in the love-fire of God's meekness and in the Holy Spirit, as a new child; and beginneth again to drink of that water and recovereth at length its life in God.

There is no temperament in which the Devil's will and suggestions may be more clearly discovered, if the soul be once enlightened, than in the melancholy, as the tempted, who have resolutely and successfully stormed his stronghold, very well know.

O how subtilely and maliciously doth

the Devil spread his nets for such a soul, as a fowler for the birds! Oftentimes he terrifieth it in its prayers, especially in the night, when it is dark, injecting his suggestions into it and filling it with fearful apprehensions that the wrath of God is ready to seize and destroy it. Thus he maketh a show as if he had power over the soul of the man, and it was his property, whereas he hath not power to touch a hair of his head. Unless the soul itself despaireth, and by that means giveth itself up to him, he dareth not spiritually and really to seize or even touch it.

He hath more than one temptation for the melancholy soul. For, if he cannot persuade it absolutely to despair and so to give itself up to him that way, he bringeth it, when over-burthened with fears and sad apprehensions about its present state and future doom, and impatient under the weight thereof, to thoughts and designs of self-murder. He

dareth not destroy a man; the man himself must do that. For the soul hath freedom. If it resisteth the Devil and will not do as he counselleth, then, however he may tempt, yet hath he not power to touch even the outward and sinful body.

The trouble of mind here spoken of is rather a subject of God's pity than of wrath. He will not break the bruised reed, nor extinguish the smoking flax. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in his blessed call and promise, saith, Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, so shall ye find rest unto your souls.

This yoke of Christ is no other than the Cross of nature and providence. This is the yoke which a man is required to take up and carry after Christ with patience, and with full submission thereto. Then the affliction, whatever it be, is so far from

hurting the soul that it doeth it much good. For while it standeth in the house of sorrow it is not in the house of sin, or in the pride, pomp, and pleasure of the world. God holdeth it with tribulation, as with a father's restraint, from the sinful pleasure of this world.

The troubled soul is apt to perplex and torment itself because it cannot open by its desire the spring of divine joy in the heart. It sigheth, lamenteth, and feareth that God will have nothing to do with it, because it cannot feel the comfort of his visible presence.

Before the time of my illumination and high knowledge it was just so with me. I went through a long and sore conflict before I obtained my noble garland. Then did I first learn to know how God dwelleth not in the outward fleshy heart, but in the centre of the soul in himself, in his own principle.

Then also I first perceived in my inward

spirit that it was God himself who had drawn me to him in and by desire. Which I understood not before, but thought the good desire had been my proper own and that God was far distant from us men. But afterwards I clearly found, and rejoiced to find, how it is that God is so gracious to us. Therefore I write this for an example and a caution to others, not in the least to give way to despair when the Comforter delayeth his coming, but rather to think of the consolatory encouragement given in David's psalm, Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

It hath fared no otherwise with the greatest saints of God. They were forced to wrestle long and earnestly for the noble garland. With which indeed no man will be crowned unless he strive for it and overcome.

It is indeed laid up in the soul, but if a man will put on that crown in the time

of this mortal life he must wrestle for it. Then, if he doth not obtain it in this world, yet he will certainly receive it after he has put off this earthly tabernacle. For Christ saith, In the world ye shall have anxiety and trouble, but in me peace. And, Be of good comfort, I have overcome the world.

I have neither pen that can write nor words that can express what the exceeding sweet grace of God in Christ is. I myself have found it by experience in this my way and course, and therefore certainly know that I have a sure ground from which I write. And I would from the bottom of my heart most willingly impart the same to my brethren in the love of Christ, who, if they will follow my faithful child-like counsels, will find by experience in themselves from whence it is that my simple mind knows and understands great mysteries.

CHAPTER XVII

* * *

THE disciple said to his Master: Sir, how may I come to the supersensual life, so that I may see God, and hear God speak?

The Master answered and said: Son, when thou canst throw thyself into That, where no creature dwelleth, though it be but for a moment; then thou hearest what God speaketh.

When thou standest still from the thinking of self and the willing of self; when both thy intellect and thy will are quiet, and passive to the impress of the eternal Word and Spirit; and when thy soul is winged up above that which is temporal, the outward senses and the imagination being locked up in holy abstraction, then the eternal hearing,

seeing, and speaking will be revealed in thee. So God heareth and seeth through thee who art now the organ of his Spirit; so God speaketh in thee and whispereth to thy spirit, and thy spirit heareth his voice.

Three things are requisite in order to this. The first is, Thou must resign thy will to God, and must sink thyself down to the dust in his mercy. The second is, Thou must hate thy own will and forbear from doing that to which thy own will doth drive thee. The third is, Thou must bow thy soul under the Cross, heartily submitting thyself to it, that thou mayest be able to bear the temptations of nature and the creature. And if thou doest this, then thou shalt hear, my Son, what the Lord speaketh in thee.

Though thou lovest the earthly wisdom now, yet when thou shalt be clothed upon with the Heavenly Wisdom, then thou wilt see that all the wisdom of the world

is folly. So shalt thou be able to stand under every temptation and to hold out to the end in a course of life above the world and above sense. In this course thou wilt hate thyself; and thou wilt also love thyself; I say, love thyself, and that even more than ever thou didst yet.

In loving thyself, thou lovest not thyself as thine own; but as given thee from the love of God thou lovest the divine ground in thee, by which and in which thou lovest the divine wisdom, the divine goodness, the divine beauty. Thou lovest also God's works of wonder, and in this same ground thou lovest thy brethren. In hating thyself thou hatest only that wherein the evil sticks close to thee. There is, there can be, no selfishness in love; they are opposed one to another. Love, that is, divine love (of which alone we are now discoursing) hates all evil selfhood. It is impossible that these two should subsist in one person; by a necessity of nature the one drives out the other.

The height of love is as high as God; it brings thee to be as high as God himself is, by uniting thee with God. Its greatness is as great as God: there is a latitude of heart in love which cannot be expressed; it enlarges the soul as wide as the whole creation of God. This shall be experienced by thee, beyond the compass of all words, when the throne of love shall be set up in thy heart. Its power supports the heavens and upholds the earth; its virtue is the principle of all principles, the virtue of all virtues. It is the worker of all things and a vital energy through all powers natural and supernatural. It is the power of all powers, nothing being able to let or hinder the omnipotence of love, or resist its penetrating might. If thou findest it thou comest into that fountain from whence all things are proceeded, into that ground wherein they subsist; and thou art a King over all the works of God.

Be silent therefore and watch unto prayer, that thy mind may be disposed

for finding that jewel, which to the world appears as nothing, but which to the children of Wisdom is all things. The way to the love of God is folly to the world, but wisdom to the children of God, for whom that which is despised of the world is the most precious treasure; yea, so great a treasure it is, that no life can express, nor tongue so much as name, what this inflaming, all-conquering love of God is. It is brighter than the sun; it is sweeter than any thing that is called sweet; it is stronger than all strength; it is more nourishment than any food, more cheering to the heart than wine, more pleasant than all the pleasantness of this world. Whosoever obtaineth it is richer than any monarch on earth, and he who winneth it is nobler than an emperor and more potent and absolute than all earthly powers and authorities.

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